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JAMES
THE FATALIST
AND
HIS MASTER.

VOL. III.

J A M E S
T H E F A T A L I S T
A N D
H I S M A S T E R.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF
DIDEROT.

IN THREE VOLUMES,

VOL. III.

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1797.

JAMES
THE
FATALIST
AND HIS
MASTER.

JAMES, while undressing his Master, says, Sir, are you not fond of pictures?

MASTER.

Yes, but in recital ; for, in colours or in canvass, though I can judge as decisively as an amateur, I will acknow-

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B

ledge

ledge to you, that I understand nothing of the matter ; that I should be greatly embarrassed to distinguish one school from another ; that they might give me a Boucher for a Rubens or a Raphael ; that I might take a bad copy for a sublime original ; that I might appreciate at a thousand crowns a daubing worth six livres, and, at six livres a piece worth a thousand crowns ; that I never provided myself, but on the bridge of Notre-Dame, at the house of Tremblin, who, in my time, was the resource of wretchedness or prodigality, and the ruin of the talents of the young pupils of Vanloo.

JAMES.

And how so ?

MASTER.

MASTER.

Why, what is that to you? Describe me your picture, and be brief, for I grow sleepy.

JAMES.

Place yourself before the Fountain of the Innocents, or near the Gate of St. Dennis; these are two accessories which will enrich the composition.

MASTER.

I imagine myself where you mention.

JAMES.

Behold in the middle of the street a hackney coach, with the main braces broken, and overturned upon its side.

B 2.

MASTER.

M A S T E R,

I see it.

J A M E S.

A monk and two girls have got out of it. The monk makes off as fast as he can run. The coachman in haste descends from his box; a dog belonging to the coachman pursues the monk, and has seized him by the jacket. The monk exerts every endeavour to rid himself of the dog. One of the girls, with her bosom and her neck uncovered, is obliged to hold her sides with laughing. The other girl, who had received a bruise upon the forehead, is leaning against the coach door, and presses her head with both hands. Meanwhile the populace assemble, the blackguard boys flock around with loud cries, the shop-keepers and their

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wives

wives have come out to the threshold of their doors, and other spectators are at their windows.

M A S T E R.

How the devil, James ! your composition is well arranged, rich, entertaining, varied, and full of motion. Upon our return to Paris, take that subject to Fragonard, and you will see what he will be able to make of it.

J A M E S.

After what you confessed to me of your knowledge in painting, I may accept your panegyric without blushing.

M A S T E R.

I will lay a wager it is one of the adventures of the Abbé Hudson.

J A M E S,

It is so.

While these good people are asleep, reader, I have a little question to propose for your discussion upon your pillow. It is, What kind of character would have been the child of the Abbé Hudson and Madame de la Pommeraye?—Perhaps an honest man.—Perhaps a consummate knave.—You will tell me to-morrow morning.

This morning then arrived and our travellers separated, for the Marquis des Arcis no longer followed the same road with James and his Master.—We are going then to assume the continuation of James's amours?—I hope so; but this at least is perfectly certain, that
the

the Master knew the precise time of day, took a pinch of snuff and said to James, Well, come, James, your amours!

James, instead of making any answer to this question, said: Is not the devil in it? From morning till night people speak ill of life, and yet they cannot come to the resolution of quitting it. Can it be because the present life, taking every thing into the account, is no such bad thing, or that they dread a worse to come?

M A S T E R.

It is owing both to the one and the other. But à-propos, James, do you believe in a future state?

B 4

JAMES.

J A M E S.

I neither believe nor disbelieve. I never think about the matter. I enjoy, as well as I am able, that part of our inheritance which has been conferred upon us in advance.

M A S T E R.

As for me I consider myself as in the Chrysalide, and I love to persuade myself that the butterfly or my soul having one day broken it's shell shall wing its flight to divine justice.

J A M E S.

Your image is charming!

M A S T E R.

It is not my own, I have read it, I believe, in an Italian poet called Danté,
who

who composed a work, entitled, *The Comedy of Hell, Purgatory and Paradise.*

J A M E S,

A very singular subject, indeed, for a comedy!

M A S T E R.

Egad, there are in it, fine things; especially in his hell. He shuts up the authors of heresies in tombs of fire from which the flames burst forth and spread devastation far around. He places the ungrateful in niches, where they shed tears which freeze upon their countenances, and the slothful in other niches; of which last, he says, that their blood oozes out of their veins, and is received by the most contemptible of worms. But from whence arose your sally against
our

our contempt of a life which we are afraid to lose?

J A M E S.

From what the secretary of the Marquis des Arcis related to me of the husband of the pretty woman in the phaeton.

M A S T E R.

She is a widow.

J A M E S.

She lost her husband in a journey she made to Paris, and the devil of a fellow would not allow the sacrament to be mentioned. It was the lady of the villa, where Richard met the Abbé Hudson, who was entrusted with the charge of reconciling him by means of the biggin.

MASTER.

M A S T E R.

What do you mean by your biggin?

J A M E S.

The biggin is a head dress which is put upon new born infants!

M A S T E R.

I understand you. And how did she contrive to perform the operation of the biggin.

J A M E S.

A circle was formed round the fire-side. The physician, after having felt the pulse of the patient which he found very low, came and seated himself beside the rest. The lady, we mention, approached his bed, and asked him several questions, but without raising her voice higher

higher than was necessary to enable the sick man to gather every word of what they wished him to comprehend ; after which the conversation was taken up by the lady, the doctor, and some other bystander, in the manner in which I am about to relate.

L A D Y.

That is true, doctor, can you give us any account of Madame de Parma?

D O C T O R.

I have just left a house where I was assured she was so ill that no hopes were entertained of her recovery.

L A D Y.

That princess has always given proofs of piety: as soon as she felt herself in
danger

danger she asked confession, and desired to receive the sacrament.

D O C T O R.

The rector of St. Roch this day carries her a relick to Versailles, but it will arrive too late.

L A D Y.

Madame the Infanta is not the only person who affords these examples. The Duke of Chevreuse, who was extremely ill, did not wait till the sacrament was proposed, he called for it himself, a circumstance which afforded great satisfaction to his family.

D O C T O R.

He is much better.

ONE

ONE OF THE BYE-STANDERS.

It is certain that this does not make a man die; quite the contrary.

L A D Y.

In truth when there is danger in the case, we ought to discharge these duties. The sick do not conceive, it would seem, how painful it is for those who are about them, and how highly requisite it is for them to make the proposal.

D O C T O R.

I have just paid a visit to a patient, who said to me two days ago, Doctor, what is your opinion of my situation?—Sir, the fever is violent and the advance is frequent.—But do you believe that any of these symptoms will soon occur?—No, I am only apprehensive for this evening.

evening.—This being the case I am going to send notice to a particular person with whom I have a little private business to transact, that we may have it settled while I yet retain all my faculties He confessed and received all his sacraments. I return in the evening, no advance had taken place. Yesterday he was better, to day he is out of danger. I have very often seen, in the course of my practice, this effect produced by the sacrament.

SICK MAN

(To his servant).

Bring me my chicken.

JAMES.

It is brought; he wishes to cut it, but has not strength. The wing is
 2 minced

minced for him in little pieces, he calls for bread, raises himself up, makes an effort to chew a mouthful, which he is unable to swallow, and returns it into his napkin; he asks for some undiluted wine with which he moistens his lips, and says: I am very well . . . Yes, but in a quarter of an hour he expired.

M A S T E R.

This lady, however, conducted herself very properly . . . And your amours?

J A M E S.

And the condition which you accepted?

M A S T E R.

I understand . . . You are now installed in the castle of Desglands and the old woman who executes commissions
for

for the family. Jane orders her young daughter, Denise, to visit you four times a day and to attend you. But before proceeding farther, tell me, had Denise her maidenhead?

J A M E S (*coughing*).

I believe so.

M A S T E R.

And you?

J A M E S.

Many a long day had mine scoured the country.

M A S T E R.

This was not then, it seems, the first time you had been in love?

J A M E S.

Why should it?

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MASTER.

M A S T E R.

Because we commonly love her to whom we give it, as we are beloved by her from whom we take it.

J A M E S.

Sometimes it so happens, sometimes not.

M A S T E R.

And how did you lose it?

J A M E S.

I did not lose it; I trucked it away, good and fair.

M A S T E R.

Tell me a word or two of this truck.

J A M E S.

That were the first chapter of Saint Luke, a long litany of such a one begot such

such a one, without end, from the first to Denise the last.

M A S T E R.

Who thought she got it, yet was mistaken.

J A M E S,

And before, Denise, the two women the neighbourhood of our cottage.

M A S T E R.

Who believed they had got it, and yet were out of their reckoning.

J A M E S.

No.

M A S T E R.

Cheat two out of a maidenhead they expected! this was not quite so fair.

J A M E S.

Hold, my Master, I guess by the corner of your right lip which you draw up, and your left nostril which you curl, that it were as well I did the thing with a good grace as upon your entreaties, the rather as I feel my sore throat getting worse, as the continuation of my amours will be long, and I have not courage, but for one or two short stories.

M A S T E R.

If James is desirous to afford me a particular pleasure . . .

J A M E S.

How should he proceed?

M A S T E R.

He would begin with the loss of his maidenhead. Must I tell you? I have
always

always been very sharp set for the recital of this great event.

J A M E S.

And why, if you please?

M A S T E R.

Because of all those of the same kind, it is the only one which is peculiarly keen, the others are nothing but insipid and common repetitions. Of all the sins of a handsome penitent, the confessor is attentive to this alone.

J A M E S.

Master, Master, I see that your head is corrupted, and that to your great affright, the devil might show himself to you under the same form of parenthesis as he appeared to Ferragus.

MASTER.

That may be; but I will lay a wager you were initiated by some old gamester of your village.

JAMES.

Do not wager for you would lose.

MASTER.

It was by your parson's maid?

JAMES.

Do not wager you would still lose.

MASTER.

It was then by his niece?

JAMES.

His niece was overrun with pride and devotion, two qualities which are very well

well coupled together, but which do not suit me.

M A S T E R.

Well, now I believe I have hit the mark.

J A M E S.

I, for my part, believe no such thing.

M A S T E R.

One fair or market day . . .

J A M E S.

It was neither a fair nor a market day.

M A S T E R.

You went to the city.

J A M E S.

I did not go to the city.

M A S T E R.

And it was decreed on high that you should meet in a tavern with some of those obliging creatures, and that you should get yourself drunk . . .

J A M E S.

I was fasting at the time, and what was decreed on high was this, that at the present hour you should bewilder yourself in false conjectures, and that you should fall into an error of which you have corrected me, the fury of guessing, and always erroneously. Such as you see me, sir, I have been once baptized.

M A S T E R.

If you propose to begin the history of the loss of your maidenhead, from
the

the period when you issued from the baptismal fount, we shall not get that length so soon.

J A M E S.

I had then a godfather and a godmother. Master Bigre, the most noted cartwright in the village, had a son. Bigre, the elder, was my godfather, and Bigre, the son, was my friend. At the age of eighteen or nineteen, we both became enamoured of a mantua-maker, called Justina. She had not the character of being extremely cruel, but she took it into her head to signalize herself by a first scorn, and her choice fell upon me.

M A S T E R.

Aye, that's one of those whimsies of woman-kind, which we cannot comprehend.

JAMES.

J. A M E S.

The whole habitation of my godfather, Mr. Bigre the cartwright, consisted in a shop and a garret. His bed was at the extremity of the shop. Bigre my friend slept in the garret, to which one clambered by a little ladder, placed almost at equal distances from his father's bed and the door of the shop. When Bigre my godfather had fairly fallen asleep, Bigre my friend silently opened the door, and Justina mounted the garret by the little ladder. In the morning at day break, before Bigre the father was awake, Bigre the son descended from his garret, opened the door, and Justina made her escape as she had entered.

MASTER.

M A S T E R.

To go and visit some other garret, her own, or another's.

J A M E S.

Why not?—The intercourse of Bigre and Justina was agreeable enough, but it was to be disturbed, this was decreed on high; and accordingly it happened.

M A S T E R.

By the father?

J A M E S.

No.

M A S T E R.

By the mother?

J A M E S.

No, she was dead.

M A S T E R.

M A S T E R.

By a rival ?

J A M E S.

Egad, no, no; by all the devils in hell, no!—My Master, it is decreed on high that you should be possessed with one all the rest of your life. As long as you live you will guess, I repeat it, and you will always guess wrong . . .

One morning, my friend Bigre having been more fatigued than ordinary with the labour of the evening or with the pleasure of the night, was reposing sweetly in the arms of Justina, when a tremendous voice was heard at the foot of the stairs, Bigre ! Bigre ! Cursed sluggard ! The *Angelus* has rung ; it is near half past five, and you are still in your garret !

Do.

Do you intend to remain there till mid-day? Must I come up and bring you down faster than you would chuse? Bigre! Bigre!—Father.—And that axle-tree which that old snarling farmer expects, do you wish him to return here about it and begin a racket?—The axle-tree is ready, and he will have it in less than a quarter of an hour . . . I leave you to judge of the pangs of Justina and my poor friend, Bigre the son.

M A S T E R.

I am sure that Justina laid down many resolutions never more to return to the garret, and that she went there the same evening.—But how did she get out in the morning?

J A M E S.

If you set about guessing, I am silent
..... Meanwhile Bigre the son,
jumped

jumped out of bed naked, his breeches in his hand, and his waistcoat over his arm. While he dressed himself, Bigre the father muttered between his teeth: Since this little mantua-maker has run in his head, every thing goes at sixes and sevens. This must have an end; it cannot last; it begins to tire me. Besides, if she were a girl worth the pains, but such a creature! God knows what a creature! Ah, if the poor woman that is no more, who was honour every inch of her, saw this, long since she would have cudgelled the one and scratched out the eyes of the other at the public church door, under the porch before every body: for nothing would have prevented her; but if I have been too indulgent hitherto, and they imagine that I will continue, they are mistaken.

MASTER.

M A S T E R.

And all these observations Justina heard from the garret?

J A M E S.

I have no doubt of it. In the meantime Bigre the son had gone away to the farmer's house, with the axle-tree upon his shoulders, and Bigre the father had fallen to his work. After a few strokes of the planer, his nose itched for a pinch of snuff. He searches for his box in his pocket, under his pillow, and it is not to be found. It is that rogue who has laid his hands on it, as usual; let us see if he has not left it above . . . and up he mounts to the garret. A moment after he discovers that he wants his pipe and his knife,
and

and he again mounts up to the garret.

M A S T E R.

And Justina ?

J A M E S.

She had huddled together her clothes in haste, and had slipped under the bed, where she was stretched out flat on her face, more dead than alive.

M A S T E R.

And your friend Bigre the son ?

J A M E S.

His axtle-tree taken home, put on and paid for, he came to our house, and explained to me the terrible dilemma in which he was placed. After diverting myself a little with him,
Hark

Hark, Bigre, says I, go take a turn through the village, wherever you have a mind, I will extricate you from this scrape. I only ask one thing, that is, to give me time . . . You smile, sir ; what do you mean by that ?

M A S T E R.

Nothing.

J A M E S.

My friend Bigre departs. I dress myself, for I had not yet got up. I go to his father's house, who, as soon as he perceived me, gave a cry of surprise and joy, saying ; Ah, godson, are you here ? Where have you been ? and what makes you up so early in the morning ? . . . My godfather Bigre really had a kindness for me, so I frankly replied, Where I have been, is

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not

not the point ; but how I am to get home again.—Ah, godson ! thou art growing a rake ; I am much afraid that Bigre and you are both alike. You have passed the night abroad.—And my father will hear no reason in such a case.—You father is in the right, godson, to take no excuse for that. But let us begin with breakfast ; a bottle may suggest something.

M A S T E R.

James, this man begins well.

J A M E S.

I answered him, that I neither wanted, nor desired to eat or drink ; and that I was sinking with fatigue and sleep. Old Bigre, who in his time had been like his neighbours, chuckling, added, Godson, she was pretty, and you kept

kept to it. Hark ye, Bigre is gone out; go up to the garret and lay yourself down in his bed . . . But a word before he returns. He is your friend; when you are by yourselves tell him, I am dissatisfied with him, very dissatisfied. It is a little girl, Justina, whom you must know, (for what lad in the village does not know her?) that has debauched him. You will do me a real service if you wean him from this creature. Formerly he was what you call a smart lad; but since he has formed this unfortunate acquaintance . . . You don't attend to me; your eyes are shut; mount and go and rest yourself.

I go up stairs, undress myself, raise up the coverlet and the sheets, and grope all round, but no Justina to be found! Meanwhile, Bigre my god-

father was saying to himself, Children! cursed children! there is not one of them who does not give vexation to his father! . . . Justina not being in the bed, I suspected she was under it. The light of the candle was very obscure. I kneel down, extend my hands, and feel one of her arms, which I seize, and draw her to me. She comes out from under the bed trembling. I embrace her, cheer her, and make signs for her to go to bed. She folds her hands, throws herself at my feet, and clasps my knees. I might not, perhaps, have been able to resist this dumb scene, had the light shone upon it; but darkness when it does not render us timid, makes us enterprising. Besides her former scorn rankled in my mind. All the answer I made was pushing her towards the ladder, which went down to the

the

the shop. She uttered a cry of terror. Bigre, who heard it, says, he is dreaming . . . Justina swooned away ; her knees sunk under her. In her delirium, she said, in a trepidating voice, He is coming — there — I hear him mounting — I am undone . . . —No, no, replied I, in a smothered tone, fear nothing, be quiet, and go to bed . . . She persists in her refusal. I remain obstinate. She resigns ; and, in a moment, we were placed by each other's side.

M A S T E R.

Traitor ! monster ! Do you know what crime you are going to commit ? You are about to violate this girl, if not by force, at least by terror. Prosecuted before the courts of justice, you

would have experienced all the rigour reserved for ravishers.

J A M E S.

I don't know whether I violated her or not ; but I know very well I did her no harm, and that she did me none. At first, turning her mouth away from my kisses, she approached my ear, and said, very low, No, no, James At this I pretended to be getting out of bed, and advancing to the ladder ; she detained me, and again whispered me, I never could have believed you so wicked ! I see that it is in vain to expect any pity from you ; but at least promise, swear to me —What ?—That Bigre shall know nothing of it.

M A S T E R.

You promised, you swore, and all went on well.

JAMES.

J A M E S.

And again extremely well.

M A S T E R.

And still, once more, exceedingly well!

J A M E S.

Precisely so; you seem to know as well as if you had been there. All this while Bigre my friend, impatient, anxious, and tired of wandering about the house, re-enters his father's shop, who says to him, peevishly, You have staid a long while about nothing . . . Bigre answered him, with more peevishness still: Was I not obliged to ease at both ends, that cursed axle-tree, which was too thick?—I told you so; but you must always have things your own way.—I did so, because it is easier

to lessen than to enlarge.—Take that spoke, and go finish it at the door.—Why at the door?—Because the noise of the tools would awake your friend James.—James! . . . Yes, James; he is above in the garret sleeping. Ah! fathers are ever to be pitied for something or other? Heydey! will you bestir yourself? You will never do your work standing there, like an idiot, drooping your head, gaping, and hanging your hands, . . . Bigre my friend, furiously incensed, darts to the ladder; Bigre my godfather, pulls him back, saying, Where are you going? Let that poor devil sleep; he is exhausted with fatigue. In his situation, how would you like to have your repose disturbed?

M A S T E R.

And Justina heard all this?

J A M E S.

As well as you hear me.

M A S T E R.

And what did you do?

J A M E S,

I laughed.

M A S T E R.

And Justina?

J A M E S.

She had torn off her night-cap, pulled her hair, raised her eyes to heaven, at least I suppose so, and wrung her hands,

MASTER.

M A S T E R.

James, you are a barbarian; you have a heart of stone.

J A M E S.

No, sir, no; I have sensibility; but I reserve it for a more suitable occasion. The prodigals of this treasure have lavished it so much when they should have practised economy that they have none left when they ought to be profuse . . . I dress myself and come down. Bigre the father, ³said to me, You had need of this; it has quite refreshed you. When you came here you looked like a ghost, and now you look as ruddy and fresh as an infant on the breast. Sleep is a good thing! . . . Bigre, go down to the cellar, and fetch a bottle, that we may have breakfast.

Now,

Now, godson, you will breakfast very willingly!—Most willingly . . .

The bottle is brought and placed upon the bench ; we stood round. Bigre the father fills his glass and mine ; Bigre the son says in a surly tone ; as for me, I am not thirsty so early in the morning.—You won't drink?—No.—Ah ! I know what is the matter ; hold, godson, he has got Justina in his head ; he has been to her house where she was not to be found, or he must have surprised her with another ; his sulkiness to the bottle is not natural, that I can tell you.—But you may have really guessed rightly, says I.—Truce with your jokes, James, says Bigre the son ; well or ill timed, I don't like them.—If he will not drink, says Bigre the father, that is no reason to prevent

prevent us from taking a glass. Your health, godson. — Yours, godfather, says I . . . Bigre my friend, drink with us ; you fret yourself too much about trifles.—Have I not already told you that I will not drink, says young Bigre.—Deuce take it ! if your father has really stumbled upon the truth, what the devil, you will see her some other time ; you will come to mutual explanations, and you will confess you have been wrong.—Ads'life, let him alone, says old Bigre ; is it not fair, that this creature should punish him for the pain he occasions me ? Come, there is another glass, and to your business. I suppose I must take you along with me to your father's house ; but, what do you propose I should tell him ?—Whatever you please, said I ; what you have heard him say a hundred times, when he has brought

brought you home your son.—Come along . . .

He goes out ; I follow ; and we arrive at the door of the house. I allow him to go in by himself. Curious to hear the conversation between old Bigre and my father, I hid myself in a corner, behind a partition, where I did not lose a single word.—Old Bigre ; Come, come, neighbour, you must forgive him for this time.—Forgive him, and for what ?—You affect to be ignorant.—I do not affect ; I actually am so.—You are fretted, and with reason.—I am not fretted.—You are, I tell you.—If you will have it so, I am satisfied ; but let me first know the folly he has committed.—Agreed ; a bargain ; but it is not his custom. A party of young lads and girls meet, they drink,

drink, laugh, dance ; hours pass quickly, and, in the mean time, the door of the house is shut . . . Bigre, lowering his voice, added ; They must not overhear us ; for, in good truth, were we a grain wiser at their age ? Do you know who make bad fathers ? those who have forgotten the faults of their youth. Tell me, have we ourselves never slept abroad ?—And you, neighbour Bigre, have we never formed attachments that were disagreeable to our parents ?—Well, and accordingly I cry more than I really suffer. Do you the same.—But James has not lain abroad this night at least, I am sure.—Why, very well ! if not, this night, some other. However, you will not be ill-natured to your boy ? — No.— And when I go away, you will not ill treat him ?—By no means.—You give me
your

your word of honour you will not?—
I give it you.—Your word of honour?
My word of honour.—All is done . . .

As my godfather Bigre was crossing the threshold, my father, tapping him gently on the shoulder, said, Bigre, my friend, there is some mystery in this business; your son and mine are two cunning blades, and I fear much, they have to day played us off one of their tricks; but time will discover. Good-bye, neighbour.

M A S T E R.

And what was the result of the adventure, between your friend Bigre and Justina?

J A M E S.

Just what it ought to have been. He stormed; she stormed more than him.
She

She wept ; he was softened ; she swore to him, that I was the best friend he had. I protested, that she was the most virtuous girl in the village. He believed us, asked pardon, loved and esteemed us afterwards more than ever.

Such is the beginning, the middle, and end of the loss of my maidenhead. Now, sir, I wish very much you would explain to me the moral tendency of this impertinent history.

M A S T E R.

To render us better acquainted with the character of women.

J A M E S.

And you had need of this lesson ?

MASTER.

M A S T E R.

And to make us better acquainted with friends.

J A M E S.

And do you believe, that any one would hold out against your wife or daughter if either proposed to make a conquest of him ?

M A S T E R.

To make us better acquainted with fathers and children . . .

J A M E S.

Ah, sir ! they have always been, and ever will be alternately the dupes of each other.

M A S T E R.

What you have now said are so many eternal truths upon which it is impossible too much to insist. Whatever be the recital which you have promised me, after this be assured that it will never be devoid of instruction but to a fool. Therefore continue.

Reader, I am attacked by a scruple, for having given James and his Master the credit of some reflections which properly belong to you. If this be the case, you may resume the property of them without any ceremony. I thought I perceived the word Bigre displease you. I would fain know why. It is the real name of the family of my cartwright. Their extracts of baptism and death testify the fact, and their contracts of marriage

marriage they signed Bigre. The descendants of Bigre, who, to this day, occupy his shop, are called Bigre. When their children, who are beautiful, pass through the streets, people say: See there the little Bigres. When you pronounce the word bowl, it reminds you of the greatest ivory cutter that ever existed. The name of Bigre is never pronounced by the people in the country where Bigre lived, without recalling to their minds the greatest cartwright on record. That Bigre, whose name is to be found at the end of all the books of pious offices, since the beginning of this century was one of the relations. If ever a grand nephew of Bigre were to signalize himself by some great action, the mere personal name of Bigre would not be less imposing to you than that of Cæsar or Condé. It is

because there are Bigres and Bigres, like Williams and Williams. If I say plain William, this will be neither William the Conqueror of Great Britain, nor the cloth merchant in the *Avocat Patelin*. The plain name of William, will be neither descriptive of a hero nor a cit. The same is the case with Bigre. Plain Bigre is neither Bigre the famous cartwright nor any one of his insignificant ancestors or insignificant descendants. In good truth, can a personal name be considered to be either in a good or bad taste? The streets are full of curs called Pompey. Lay aside then this false delicacy, or I shall do with you, as Lord Chatham with the members of parliament. He said to them, Sugar, Sugar, Sugar; what is there ridiculous contained in that? . . . And I will say to you: Bigre, Bigre, Bigre; why

why may not a man be called Bigre? As an officer observed to his general, the great Condé, there is a bold Bigre, like Bigre the cartwright, a good Bigre like you and me, and silly Bigres, like vast numbers of others.

J A M E S.

I remember one wedding day, when brother John had married the daughter of one of our neighbours, that I, being bridegroom's-man, was placed at table between two of the greatest wags in the parish. I had the air of a great simpleton, though I was not such a fool as they imagined. They put some questions to me about the marriage night. I answered foolishly enough, at which they burst out into loud fits of laughter, while the wives of these two jesters cried from the other end, what is

the matter? You are all very merry there!—Something exceedingly diverting, replied one of our husbands to his wife, I will tell you at night.—The other, who was no less curious, put the same question to her husband, and received the same answer. The repast was prolonged and also my questions and absurdities, the bursts of laughter and the surprise of the women. To the repast succeeded a dance; after the dance, the bedding of the bride and bridegroom, the throwing of the stocking; I went to my bed, and our two wags to theirs, where they recounted to their wives

.
 *

* Here, the translator, in compliance with the delicacy of English readers, has suppressed James's recital, being of a nature too offensive
 for

J A M E S.

Every time that I remember a certain little man crying, swearing, foaming, struggling with head, feet, hands, and whole body, ready to throw himself down from the hay-loft, at the risk of breaking his neck, I cannot refrain from laughing.

M A S T E R.

And this little man, who was he ?

James made no answer to this question ; and the Master added ;

Only tell me who this little man was ?

for them, however it may appear in the freer, looser style of the French—The reader who may be satisfied with the author's apology, page 64, &c. can refer to the original.

E 4

JAMES.

J A M E S.

One day a child, seated at the foot of the counter of a sempstress, was crying with all his might. The mistress of the shop, teased with his cries, said, my dear, why do you cry?—Because they wish to make me say A.—And why won't you say A?—Because no sooner is A said, than they will make me say B . . . Thus, no sooner shall I have told you the name of the little man, than I must tell you the rest.

M A S T E R,

Possibly enough.

J A M E S,

Nay, it is certain.

M A S T E R.

Come, my friend James, tell me the name of the little man. You are like
to

to die with eagerness to be out with it ?
Satisfy your own inclination.

J A M E S.

There was a dwarfish, hunch-backed, crooked, stuttering, one-eyed, lecherous creature, in love with, and perhaps beloved by a mistress Susan. He was the curate of the parish.

James was as like the sempstress's child as any two things in the world, with this difference, that since he had got his sore throat, it was very difficult to make him say A ; but, once begun, he went on of himself to the end of the alphabet.

J A M E S.

I was in Susan's barn along with her . . .

M A S T E R.

And you were not there for nothing.

JAMES.

J A M E S,

No. When the curate arrived, he was ill-humoured, grumbled, asked imperiously of Susan what she was doing *tête-à-tête* with the most profligate lad in the village, in the most retired place of the cottage ?

M A S T E R.

By what I can see, you had already acquired a reputation.

J A M E S.

And very well deserved it. He was sadly fretted. To this remark, he added others less obliging. I, on my part, lost temper also. From invective to invective we proceeded to blows. I seized a pitch-fork ; I passed it between his legs, a prong on each side, and
one

one in the middle, and tost him into the hay-loft, for all the world like a bottle of hay.

M A S T E R,

And was this hay-loft high ?

J A M E S.

Ten feet at least ; and it was impossible for the little man to come down without breaking his neck.

M A S T E R,

Well, how then ?

J A M E S.

After I had removed this pitiful wretch out of the way, I took some liberties with Susan ; whilst the priest, unable to contain himself for rage, fell a crying, mu . . . mu . . . murder ! . . . murder ! . . . Fi . . . fi . . . fire . . . fire . . . fire ! . . . Ro . . . ro . . . robber !
and,

and, at this, the husband, whom we thought far enough off, runs in.

M A S T E R.

I am incensed ; I don't love priests.

J A M E S.

And you had been enchanted with the very sight of the one to whom I allude . . .

M A S T E R.

No doubt.

J A M E S.

I adjusted myself and made off; Susan told me what follows. The husband, who saw the curate perched upon the hay-loft, fell a laughing. The curate said to him : La . . la . . laugh heartily . . . fo . . fo . . fool that you are. The husband

band followed his direction, laughed most heartily, and demanded, who had placed him in that situation?—Curate. P . . . p . . . put me dow . . . dow . . . down. The husband continued to laugh, and asked him how he was to proceed?—Curate. A . . . a . . . as I . . . I . . . moun . . . moun . . . mounted wi . . . wi . . . with the fo . . . fo . . . fork.—Body of me, but, you are right, says the husband; ah, see what it is to have studied! . . . — And taking up the fork, presents it to the curate, who fixes himself upon it, in the same manner as when I tossed him up. The husband wheels him round the barn two or three times, perched on the end of the fork, accompanying this operation with humming a popular song, and the curate cried, La . . . la . . . lay me dow . . . dow . . . down, ra . . . ra . . . rascal;

wo-

wo . . . wo . . . won't you la . . . la . . .
 lay me dow . . . dow . . . down ? And
 the husband said to him, What hinders
 me, Mr. Curate, from exhibiting you thus
 through all the streets of the village ?
 Never, I am sure, was such a fine pro-
 cession as this ever seen . . . At length
 the Curate got off for the terror he had
 suffered, and the husband set him down.
 I know not what he said to the hus-
 band, for Susan had made her escape ;
 but I heard, wre . . . wre . . . wretch !
 you . . . you . . . you will stri . . . stri . .
 strike a prie . . . prie . . . priest. I . . .
 I . . . I will ex . . . ex . . . co . . . co . . .
 communicate you : you . . . you . . . will be
 da . . . da . . . damned. It was the lit-
 tle man who uttered these complaints ;
 and it was the husband who pursued,
 belabouring him with the fork. I ar-
 rived, with many others, and as soon as
 the

the husband perceived me, he clenched his fork like a lance, and cried out, Approach.

M A S T E R.

And Susan?

J A M E S.

She extricated herself.

M A S T E R.

Badly, I suppose?

J A M E S.

Oh, no ; women always extricate themselves well, when they are not caught in open act . . . What do you laugh at ?

M A S T E R.

At that which will make me laugh, as well as you, every time I remember
the

the little priest at the end of the husband's fork.

J A M E S.

It was a short time after this adventure, which reached the ears of my father, who laughed at it also, that I enlisted, as I have already told you.

After some moments of silence, in which some say, James coughed, others that he laughed ; his Master said to him ; And the history of your amours ? —James shook his head and made no reply.

How can a man of sense, who has any regard to morality, and who piques himself upon being a philosopher, amuse himself in recounting such obscene stories ?—In the first place, reader, they are not stories ; it is a his-
3 tory ;

tory ; and I do not consider myself more culpable, perhaps I am less so, when I relate the follies of James, than Suetonius, when he transmitted to us the debaucheries of Tiberius. Yet you read Suetonius, without affixing any reproach to his character. Why do not you knit your brows at Catullus, at Martial, at Horace, at Juvenal, at Petronius, at la Fontaine, and a great many others ? Why do not you say to Seneca, the stoic, What need is there for representing the drunkenness of your slave in concave mirrors ? How ! are you disposed to shew indulgence to the dead ? If you reflect a moment upon this partiality, you will find that it is the source of some vicious principles. If you are innocent you will not read any book ; if you are corrupted, you will read it without harm. And,

if you are not satisfied with what I say, open the preface of John Baptist Rousseau, and there you will find my apology.

Who is there among you that will dare to censure Voltaire, for having composed *The Maid of Orleans*? None. Have you then different scales for weighing the actions of men? But you say, Voltaire's *Maid of Orleans* is a master piece!—So much the worse, for it will be the more generally read.—And your *James* is only an insipid rhapsody of facts, some real, others imaginary, related without elegance, and distributed without order.—So much the better; my *James* will be the less read. On either supposition you are wrong. If my work is good, you will be pleased with it; if it is bad, it will do no harm.

There

There is no book more innocent than a bad book. I amuse myself with writing, under feigned names, the follies which you commit: your follies make me laugh; my narrations make you angry.

Reader, I tell you frankly, I perceive that I am less wicked than thou art. I would be satisfied were it as easy to secure your character against foul stains, as it is to prevent you from being tired with my work, or from being hurt by it. Hypocritical rascals, leave me at rest

.*

You talk boldly of murdering, robbing, betraying, and the other you will scarce venture to mutter. The

* A few words are here expunged, for reasons assigned in the note of page 54.

less you exhale from these pretended impurities by words, will there not the more remain in your thoughts? And what is there in the act of generation, so natural, so necessary, and so proper, that the sign of it should be excluded from your conversation; or that you should imagine, that your mouth, your eyes, and your ears, would be defiled by it? It is a wise arrangement, that the expressions which are least used, and most seldom introduced into books or conversation, should be those which are best known and most generally understood. This is the fact; for instance, the word *futuo* is as familiar as the word bread; no age is ignorant of its meaning; no country wants an idiom by which to express it; there are a thousand synonymous terms for it in every language; every person under-

understands it, though it be neither expressed by sound nor figure; and the sex which practise it the most are in use of speaking of it the least. I hear you still calling out, Fie, Cynic ! fie brazenface ! fie sophist ! . . . Avaunt ; you insult a valuable author, whom you have continually in your hands, and of whom I am only a translator. The licentiousness of his style is almost a sufficient proof to me of the purity of his manners ; I mean Montaigne. *Lasciva est nobis pagina, vtilis proba.*

James and his Master passed the rest of the day without opening their mouths. James coughed, and his Master said ; That is a cruel cough ! He looked at his watch to see what hour it was, without informing himself ; he opened his snuff-box without thinking,

and he took a pinch of snuff without being sensible of it; what convinces me of it, is that he did these things three or four times successively and exactly in the same order. A moment after, James coughed again, and his Master said: What a devilish cough! aye, aye, this comes with calling, hostess, wine, wine, till you could hold no more; and last night, with the secretary, you were no better; when you came up stairs you staggered, you did not know what you said, and to day you have halted ten times, and I will wager that there is not a drop of wine in the flask He then muttered between his teeth, looked at his watch, and regaled his nostrils.

I forgot to tell you, reader, that James never went out without a flask filled with the best, it was suspended at the pommel of his saddle. Every time his
Master

Master interrupted his narration by a question of any length, he untied his flask, regaled himself with a mouthful, and did not put it back into its place till his Master had given over speaking.

I also forgot to tell, that in cases which required any reflection, his first motion was to consult his flask. Was he called upon to resolve a question in morality; to discuss a fact; to prefer one road to another; to begin; to continue; or to abandon any piece of business; to balance the advantages and the disadvantages of a political regulation; of a speculation in commerce or finance; the wisdom or the folly of a law; the fate of a war; the choice of an inn, the choice of an apartment in an inn, or the choice of a bed in an apartment; his first word was, Let us consult the flask—and the last: It is the opinion of me and the

F 4

flask.

flask. When destiny in his head was silent it made responses by the flask ; it was a kind of portable Pythia, which was silent as soon as it was empty. At Delphos, the Pythia, with her petticoats tucked up, sat bare upon a tripod and received her inspiration from below ; James on his horse, with his head turned up towards the heavens, his flask uncorked, and its neck in his mouth, received his inspiration from on high. When the Pythia and James pronounced their oracular responses, they were both drunk. He pretended that the spirit descended upon the apostles in a flask ; he called the day of Pentecost the festival of flasks. He has left a small treatise upon all sorts of divinations, a profound treatise, in which he gives the preference to divination by Bacbuc or by the flask. He proved the

curate

curate of Meudon to be wrong, notwithstanding all the respect he entertained for him in consulting the divine Bacbuc by the salutation of the paunch. I love Rabelais, said he, but I love truth better than Rabelais. He calls him the heretical *Engastrimeste*, and he proves by an hundred reasons, each stronger than another, that the true oracles of Bacbuc or the flask, were delivered only by the throat. He reckons up a number of the distinguished votaries of Bacbuc, of those who have been really inspired by the flask for the last centuries, Rabelais, la Fare, Chapelle, Chaulieu, la Fontaine, Moliere, Panard, Galet, Vadé.—Plato and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who extolled wine without drinking it, are, in his opinion, two false brothers of the flask. The flask had formerly some celebrated sanctuaries, the Pomme-de-Pin,

Pin, the Temple, and the Guinguette, a sanctuary of which he writes a separate history. He draws a splendid picture of the enthusiasm, the fervour, and the zeal with which the Bacbucians or Perigourdians were, and are still seized in our day, when, at the conclusion of their reports, their elbows leaning upon the table, the divine Bacbuc, or the sacred flask appeared, she was set down in the middle, she hissed, cast the cork, and covered her votaries with her prophetic foam. His manuscript is embellished with two portraits, under which is written: *Anacreon and Rabelais, the one among the ancients, the other among the moderns, sovereign pontiffs of the flask.*

And James employed the term *Engastrimeste* . . . Why not, reader? James's

captain was a Bacbucien, he might know the expression, and James, who was in the habit of collecting every thing he said, might remember it; but the truth is the word *Engastrimeste* is my own, and in the original text we read *Ventrilôquist*.

All this is very well, you add; but the amours of James?—The amours of James! there is none but James who knows them, and his confounded sore throat reduces the Master to the necessity of having recourse to his watch and his snuff-box; he is as much afflicted, by the suspension of the conversation, as you are.—What is to become of us then?—Upon my word I do not know. This would have been a proper occasion for consulting the divine Bacbuc or the sacred flask; but her worship is abandoned,

done, her temples are deserted. As the Pagan oracles, at the birth of our divine Saviour, ceased to utter their responses, so at the death of Gallet, the oracles of Bacbuc became dumb; no more grand poems, no more grand pieces of sublime eloquence, no more productions stamped with inebriation and genius; every thing is laboured, formal, scholastic and dull. O divine Bacbuc! O sacred flask! O divinity of James! return among us! . . . I am seized, reader, with a desire of entertaining you with the divine Bacbuc, the prodigies which accompanied and followed her; the wonders of her reign, and the disasters of her retreat; and if James's sore throat lasts and his Master perseveres in silence, you must be contented with this episode which I shall endeavour to
prolong

prolong till James is cured, and resumes the history of his amours.

There is here a truly deplorable blank in the conversation of James and his Master. Some day a descendant of Naudot, of the President de Brasse, of Freinshemius or of Father Brothier, will perhaps fill it up, and the descendants of James or of his Master, the proprietors of the manuscript, will laugh at them.

It appears that James, who was rendered silent by his sore throat, suspended the history of his amours, and that his Master began the history of his. This is only a conjecture of my own, which I offer for what it is worth. After a few dotted lines which announce the blank, we read: There is not a

greater misfortune in this world than to be a fool . . . Was it James who brought forward this apothegm? or was it his Master? This might form a subject for a long and intricate dissertation. If James had the insolence to address this observation to his Master, the latter was candid enough to apply it to himself. However that might be, it is too evident that it was the Master who continued.

M A S T E R.

It was the eve of her entertainment; and I had no money. The Chevalier de St. Ovin, my intimate friend, never was embarrassed by any thing. You have no money, said he to me?—No.—Well! you must get some.—And do you know how I can get it?—Certainly.—He dressed himself, we went out, and he
con-

conducted me through several streets to a small obscure house where we ascended by a little stair-case to the third floor, on which we entered into a spacious apartment, singularly furnished. Among other things there were three chests of drawers in the front, all of a different fashion; behind that which stood in the middle, there was a large mirror, the top of which was too high for the cieling, so that a foot of the mirror was concealed by these drawers; upon the drawers were exposed goods of every kind; there were two pair of tables; round the apartment were placed some very handsome chairs but not one like another; at the foot of a bed without curtains was a superb duchess; in one of the windows an aviary quite new without birds; at the other window a lustre suspended by a broom stick which was supported
at

at the ends by the backs of two old chairs with straw bottoms; on the right and on the left were pictures, some fixed to the wall, others piled up.

J A M E S.

This man seems as if he served the country for a league round.

M A S T E R.

You have guessed it. The Chevalier and M. le Brun (this was the name of our broker and usurer) flew into one another's arms . . . Oh! is it you, M. le Chevalier?—Yes, it is I, my dear le Brun.—But what has become of you for this age, since I saw you last? The times are very bad, are they not?—Very bad indeed, my dear le Brun. But that is not the business in hand; hark ye.

ye, I have a word to speak to you . . .—
I sat down, the Chevalier and le Brun
retired into a corner and conversed. I
cannot tell you their conversation, ex-
cepting a few detached words which I
over heard . . . Is he good?—Excellent.
—Of age?—More than of age.—And the
elder son?—Yes.—Do you know that
our two last affairs Speak lower.—
The father?—Rich.—Old?—And frail.
—Le Brun, in a higher tone of voice :
hold, M. le Chevalier, I do not wish to
meddle in these matters, they are always
attended with troublesome consequences.
He is your friend, no doubt, and the
gentleman has a respectable look; but . .
—My dear le Brun!—I have no money.
—But you have acquaintances!—They
are all rogues, scurvy knaves. M. le
Chevalier, are you not tired of passing
through such hands?—Necessity has no
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law.—The necessity by which you are pressed is a pleasant necessity, an intrigue, a party of pleasure, some girl . . . My dear friend! . . .—I am still the same, I am as weak as a child; and then you are so insinuating in your manner that I believe there is nobody in the world whom you could not prevail upon to engage in your service, in spite of oaths to the contrary. Come, ring the bell then, that I may know if Fourgeot be at home No, do not ring, Fourgeot will take you to Merval.—Why cannot you do it?—I do it! I swear this vile Merval would do nothing, either for me or my friends. You must answer for the gentleman, who perhaps, who certainly is, an honest man; I must answer for you to Fourgeot, and Fourgeot must answer for me to Merval . . .—In the mean while the maid servant came in, demanding, if
he

he chose to be at home to M. Fourgeot. —Le Brun, to the servant : no, there is no person at home . . . M. le Chevalier, I will not, absolutely I will not.—The Chevalier embraces and caresses him: my dear le Brun, my dear friend ! . . . I drew near, joining my entreaties to those of the Chevalier; M. le Brun ! my dear sir ! . . .—Le Brun allowed himself to be persuaded. The servant, who smiled at this mummery, retires, and in a twinkling, shows up a little lame fellow dressed in black, with a cane in his hand ; he stuttered in his conversation, his countenance was lean and shrivelled; his eye piercing. The Chevalier turns to him and says : Come, Mr. Matthew Fourgeot, we have not a moment to lose, conduct us without delay . . . Fourgeot, without seeming to pay any attention, unties a small shammy purse. The Chevalier to Fourgeot ;

by no means, that belongs to us . . . I drew near, I pulled out a crown which I passed to the Chevalier, who gives it to the servant, at the same time, chucking her under the chin. In the mean while, le Brun said to Fourgeot : I forbid it, do not conduct these gentlemen thither. — Fourgeot : M. le Brun, wherefore ?—He is a knave, a rank knave.—I know very well that Mr. Merval . . . but there is mercy for every sin ; and besides I know no person but him who has money at the moment.—Le Brun ! Mr. Fourgeot, do as you please ; Gentlemen, I wash my hands of it.—Fourgeot to le Brun : M. le Brun, will not you come with us ?—Le Brun ; I go with you ! God preserve me ! he is an infamous fellow, whom I never will see again while I live.—Fourgeot ; but without you we can do nothing.—
Che-

Chevalier ; it is true. Come, my dear le Brun, it will be doing me a favour, it will be obliging a generous man who is in difficulty ; you will not refuse me ; you will . . . Le Brun ; I go to Merval's ! I ! I go !—Chevalier ; yes, you will go for my sake . . .—

By the dint of solicitation, le Brun was prevailed on, and le Brun, the Chevalier, Matthew de Fourgeot, and I set out ; the Chevalier, by the way, taking le Brun in a friendly manner by the hand, and saying to me, He is the best man in the world, a most obliging man, the best acquaintance . . .—Le Brun ; I believe that M. le Chevalier could make me coin money . . .—At length we arrive at Merval's.—

J A M E S.

Matthew de Fourgeot . . .

M A S T E R.

Well ; What do you intend to say ?

J A M E S.

Matthew de Fourgeot . . . I mean to say that M. le Chevalier de Saint-Ouin knew these people by name and surname, and that there was a kind of scoundrel understanding among all this crew.

M A S T E R.

You may be right . . . It is impossible to find a more pleasant, more civil, more genteel, more polite, more humane, more compassionate, more disinterested man than Mr. Merval. My age of majority

majority and my solvency being proved, Mr. Merval assumed a mingled air of affection and concern, and told us, in a tone of regret, he was extremely vexed that no later than this morning he had been obliged to assist one of his friends who was in a situation of the most urgent necessity, and that he was quite aground. Then addressing himself to me, he added: sir, do not distress yourself because you did not come sooner. I should have been sorry to have refused you, but I must have done it, for friendship with me takes precedence of every thing . . .—We were all much surprised; the Chevalier, le Brun, and even Fourgeot, fell down at Merval's knees, whilst Merval said to them: Gentlemen, you all know me, I love to oblige, and I endeavour not to spoil the services which I do by performing them in consequence

of solicitation ; but, upon the honour of a man, there are not four louis in the house . . .

As for me, I stood in the midst of these people like a criminal who had heard his sentence. I said to the Chevalier ; Chevalier, let us go, since these gentlemen can do nothing . . . The Chevalier, pulling me aside, replied, You do not recollect it is the eve of her entertainment. I have given her notice, remember, and she expects a display of gallantry on your part. You know her ; it is not that she is selfish ; but she is like every body else, she does not relish being disappointed in her expectations. She is now, perhaps, boasting to her father and mother, her aunts and her friends ; and, after all, to have nothing to shew them would be truly mortifying.

ing . . . He then turned to Merval, and became more pressing than ever.

Merval, after they had got him to draw his purse, says, I am the greatest fool in the world, I cannot see people in difficulty. Well, I think there is an idea which strikes me—Chevalier: What idea?—Why not take some goods?—Chevalier: Have you any?—No; but I am acquainted with a woman who will furnish you with some; an excellent woman, an honest woman.—Le Brun; aye, but she will furnish us with a parcel of rags, for which we must pay their weight in gold, and which will bring us nothing in return.—Merval: no, indeed; very fine things, gold and silver trinkets, silk stuffs of all kinds, pearls, jewels; there will be very little loss upon such effects. She

is a good creature and contented with a small profit provided she has sureties; these are goods which bring her a very high price. You may, at least, look at them, the sight will cost you nothing . . .—I represented to Merval and to the Chevalier, that I was not in the way of merchandizing, and that, though this arrangement was not disagreeable to me, my situation would not permit me to avail myself of the advantages to be derived from it. The obliging le Brun and Matthew Fourgeot said both at once; let not this be any impediment, we will dispose of them for you, it is only the business of half a day . . . The business at Merval's house was adjourned till the afternoon, and Merval, tapping me upon the shoulder, said in a soft and penetrating tone: Sir, I am delighted in having it in my power to oblige you, but

but take my advice and make few such loans, they always end in ruin. It will be a wonder if ever you fall into the hands of such honest persons as Messrs. le Brun and Matthew Fourgeot . . . Le Brun and Fourgeot Matthew, or Matthew Fourgeot, made a bow, thanked him, and said that he was very good; that they had always endeavoured, in the little commerce which they had with the world, to act agreeably to the dictates of their conscience, and that upon this account they had no claim to praise.—Merval: I beg your pardon, gentlemen, for who is there now that has any conscience? Ask M. le Chevalier de St. Ouin who must know something of these matters . . . We left Merval's, who asked at the top of the stair case if he might depend upon us, to give notice to his female acquaintance.

We

We replied that he might, and went at four to dine at a neighbouring tavern till the hour of meeting arrived.

It was Matthew Fourgeot who ordered the dinner, and he ordered a good one. While we are at the desert, two young wenches came to our table with their cymbals; le Brun made them sit down. We made them drink, talk, and play. While my three guests were amusing themselves in tumbling about one of them, her companion, who was sitting beside me, said in a low tone of voice: Sir, you are in very bad company, there is not one of these people whose name is not in the red book *.

* The register of police.

We

We left the tavern at the hour appointed, and repaired to Merval's. I forgot to tell you that this dinner emptied both my purse and the Chevalier's, and that by the way le Brun told the Chevalier, who informed me, that Matthew Fourgeot demanded ten louis for his commission; that it was the least we could give him; that if he was satisfied with us we should get the goods at the lowest price, and that we might easily make this sum upon the sale.

We arrived at Merval's, where his merchant had gone before us with her goods. Mademoiselle Bridoise (this was her name) loaded us with politeness and honours, and shewed us some stuffs, linnen, lace, rings, diamonds, and gold boxes. We took a part of
every

every thing. Le Brun, Matthew Fourgeot, and the Chevalier, put the value upon the different articles, and Merval held the pen. The total amounted to nineteen thousand, seven hundred, and seventy-five livres, for which I was going to give my note, when Mademoiselle Bridoie said to me, making a courtesy at the same time (for she never addressed any person without making her honours): Sir, you propose to pay your notes when they become due?—Certainly, I answered.—In this case, replied she, it is matter of indifference to you whether you give your notes or bills of exchange.—At the word bills of exchange I grew pale. The Chevalier perceiving it said to Mademoiselle Bridoie; bills of exchange, Mademoiselle! but these bills circulate and there is no saying into what hands they may fall.

fall.—You are mistaken, M. le Chevalier, said she, I am not so ignorant of the respect we owe to persons of your rank . . . And then a courtesy . . . I keep these papers in my pocket book and never produce them, except at the time of payment. Hold, see . . . another courtesy . . . Then taking her pocket book out of her pocket she read a number of names of persons of all ranks and conditions. The Chevalier came up to me, and said: Bills of exchange ! this is devilish serious ! Resolve upon what you mean to do. This woman appears to me to be honest ; and before the period of payment, you or I will be in cash.

JAMES.

And you signed bills of exchange ?

MASTER.

I did.

JAMES.

J A M E S.

It is usual for fathers when their children set out for the capital, to give them a short sermon. Do not frequent bad company ; render yourselves agreeable to your superiors by a punctual performance of your duty ; preserve your religion ; avoid dissolute women and sharpers ; but, above all, never sign bills of exchange.

M A S T E R.

As you may suppose I was not better than my neighbours, the first thing that I forgot was my father's lesson. I was provided with goods to sell, but we were in want of money. The Chevalier took some pairs of very fine lace ruffles at prime cost, telling me at the same time : this is one part of your property

property disposed of without any loss. Matthew Fourgeot took a watch and two gold boxes, the value of which he was immediately to bring me. Le Brun deposited the rest of the effects in his house. I put in my pocket a very handsome robe with trimmings ; this was one of the flowers of the *bouquet* which I meant to present to my mistress. Matthew Fourgeot returned, in a twinkling, with sixty louis, he kept ten for himself and I received the other fifty. He told me that he had neither sold the watch nor the two boxes, but that he had put them in pawn.

J A M E S.

In pawn ?

M A S T E R.

Yes.

J A M E S.

I know where.

M A S T E R.

Where ?

J A M E S.

At Miss Courtesy la Bridoie's.

M A S T E R.

You are right. Along with the trimmings and the robe, I took also a handsome ring, with a patch box inlaid with gold. I had fifty louis in my purse, and the Chevalier and I set out in a style of the highest gaiety.

J A M E S.

This is all very well. There is only one thing which I am puzzled to account

count

count for, the disinterestedness of Master le Brun ; did he get no part of the spoil ?

M A S T E R.

Come, come, James, you are mistaken, you do not know M. le Brun. I begged to be grateful to him for his good offices ; he was angry, and replied that I seemed to take him for a Matthew Fourgeot ; that he had never been a beggar. Ah ! my dear le Brun, cried the Chevalier, is still the same ; but we should be sorry to be out done in generosity . . . And saying that, he took from amongst our goods two dozen of handkerchiefs and a piece of muslin, which he tendered to his acceptance as a present to his wife and daughter. Le Brun, after inspecting the handkerchiefs which were very beautiful and the muslin which was exceedingly fine, and considering that

they had been offered with so good a grace, as well as the opportunity which he should soon have of recompensing us by the sale of the goods which still remained in his hands, suffered himself to be prevailed upon to accept them ; we set out and drove full speed in a hackney coach to the house of the lady with whom I was in love, and for whom the robe, the trimmings, and the ring were intended. The present succeeded to a wonder. Every thing was charming; she immediately tried on the robe and the trimmings ; the ring seemed as if it had been made for her finger. We supped in an elegant style, as you may well suppose.

J A M E S.

And you slept there ?

MASTER.

MASTER.

No.

JAMES.

The Chevalier then did?

MASTER.

I believe so.

JAMES.

From the scale of expence on which you set out, your fifty louis would not last long.

MASTER.

No. In about eight days we repaired to le Brun's, to see what the rest of the goods had brought.

JAMES.

Little or nothing. Le Brun would appear to be sorry, affect to rail against

Merval and Miss Courtesy; call them scurvy, infamous knaves; swear that he never would again have any thing to do with them—and, perhaps, gave you seven or eight hundred livres.

M A S T E R.

A little more; eight hundred and seventy.

J A M E S.

So that if I can calculate a little, the eight hundred and seventy livres that you received from le Brun, the fifty louis that you got from Merval or Fourgeot, the robe with the trimmings, and the ring valued at fifty louis more, was all which you had in return for nineteen thousand, seven hundred and seventy-five livres worth of goods. The devil! this was fine work! Merval
was

was right, one cannot every day find such worthy people to deal with.

M A S T E R.

You forgot the ruffles, taken by the Chevalier at prime cost.

J A M E S.

Because the Chevalier never spoke to you of them.

M A S T E R.

I grant it. And the two gold boxes, and the watch put in pawn by Matthew, you have said nothing about.

J A M E S.

Because I know not what to say about them.

H 4

MASTER.

MASTER.

In the mean time the period arrived at which the bills of exchange became due.

JAMES.

And neither you nor the Chevalier had funds to pay them.

MASTER.

I was obliged to skulk. My relations were informed of it, one of my uncles came to Paris. He presented a memorial to the police against all the cheats. This memorial was transmitted to one of the commissioners, who happened to be the sworn protector of Merval. He gave for answer, that as the business came under the regular course of justice the police could do nothing. The
person

person who advanced the money upon the two boxes, commenced a suit against Matthew. I interfered in the process. The expences of justice were so enormous, that after the sale of the watch and the boxes, there were still wanting from five to six hundred livres to pay the deficiency of costs

You will not believe this, reader: Nor will you give me credit for the following fact. A maker of lemonade died some time ago in my neighbourhood and left two poor orphans of a tender age. The commissary went to the house of the deceased and put a seal upon his property. The seal was broken, an inventory taken, and a sale held; the sale produced from eight to nine hundred livres. Of these nine hundred livres, after the expences of justice were defrayed,

defrayed, there remained four sous for the orphans; thus they received two sous each, and were both conducted to the hospital.—

M A S T E R.

This was horrible.

J A M E S.

And yet the grievance still continues.

M A S T E R.

In the mean time my father died. I paid the bills of exchange and came forth from my retreat, where, for the honour of the Chevalier and my mistress, I will confess they kept me very faithful company.

J A M E S.

And you were still as much attached as ever to the Chevalier and your mistress;

tress; your mistress holding the sugar plumbs higher from you than ever.

M A S T E R,

And what could be their motive, James?

J A M E S.

Their motive? Why, that you being master of your person and possessor of a handsome fortune, they wished to render you a compleat fool, by making you a husband.

M A S T E R.

Upon my word, I believe that this was their project, but it did not succeed.

J A M E S.

You are either very fortunate, or they must have been very inexpert in their management.

M A S T E R.

MASTER.

Faith, I think you are not so hoarse as you was. You seem to speak pretty fluently.

JAMES.

You may think so, but it is not the case.

MASTER.

You cannot then resume the history of your amours?

JAMES.

No.

MASTER.

And your opinion is that I should continue the history of mine?

JAMES.

My opinion is that we should pause a little and elevate the flask.

MASTER.

M A S T E R.

What! Have you filled your flask, notwithstanding your sore throat?

J A M E S.

Yes, but by all the devils, it is with water-gruel; this is the reason why I have no ideas, I am a mere brute, and, while there is nothing in the flask but water-gruel, I shall continue so.

M A S T E R.

What are you about?

J A M E S.

I am pouring out the water-gruel; for I am afraid it will bring some misfortune upon us.

MASTER.

You are certainly mad.

JAMES.

Mad or wise, there's not a drop remaining in the flask.

While James was emptying the flask upon the ground, his Master looks at his watch, opens his snuff-box, and prepares for continuing the history of his amours. And I, reader, am tempted to shut his mouth, by shewing him, at a distance, either an old soldier, with a remarkable stoop, advancing on horseback at a quick pace, or a young country woman with a small straw hat and red petticoats, making her way on foot or upon an ass. And why might not the old soldier be James's Captain, or his Cap-

tain's comrade?—But he is dead.—Do you believe it? And pray why might not the young country woman be Mistress Susan, or the shrewd Hostess of the Stag, or mother Jean, or even Denise her daughter? A romance writer would not fail to make it one or other of them, but I do not like romances, except it be those of Richardson. I am writing history; whether this history be interesting or uninteresting, is the least of my care. My plan was to adhere to truth, and I have executed it. Therefore I shall not make Brother John return from Lisbon: that fat prior, who comes to us in a phaeton by the side of a handsome young woman, shall not be the Abbé Hudson.—But the Abbé Hudson is dead?—Do you believe it? did you assist at his funeral obsequies?—No.—Did you see him laid in the earth?—No.

—No.—He is dead or alive then as you please. I might stop this phaeton, and make the friar and his companion give rise to a series of events which would disappoint you of hearing both James's amours and those of his Master ; but I despise such resources, I see that it only requires a little imagination and some command of language to frame a romance. Let us adhere to truth and till James recovers from his sore throat, let us permit his Master to speak.

M A S T E R.

One morning the Chevalier appeared to be very low spirited ; it was the day after we had made a little excursion in the country ; the Chevalier, his mistress, or mine, or both, her father, mother, aunts, cousins, and myself. He asked if I had been guilty of any indiscretion which
had

had betrayed my passion to her relations. He informed me that her father and mother, alarmed at my assiduities, had questioned their daughter; saying, if I had honourable views, nothing was more simple than to avow them; that they would do themselves the honour of receiving me on these conditions, but if I did not freely explain myself within a fortnight, they entreated me to drop my visits, which were become remarkable, had been subject of observation, and might injure the girl by depriving her of advantageous offers which might be made her, were it not for the apprehension of a refusal.

J A M E S.

Well, Master, can James smell their tricks, or not?

M A S T E R.

The Chevalier added: in fifteen days! the term is very short. You are either in love or you are not; in fifteen days! what do you propose to do?—I replied, without any hesitation, to the Chevalier, that I would withdraw.—Withdraw! you are not in love then?—I am in love; but I have relations, a name, an estate, and some pretensions; and I never can resolve to bury all these advantages in the arms of a cit's pert little daughter.—And shall I let them know this?—If you please. But, Chevalier, the sudden and scrupulous delicacy of these people surprises me. They have allowed their daughter to accept my entertainments, and they have left me *tête-à-tête* with her twenty times. Besides, she frequents balls, assemblies, and all spectacles of fashionable

ble

ble resort; she jaunts in country and in town with the first person who has a good equipage to offer. They sleep soundly, when concerts or routs are given at her lodgings. You frequent the house as much as you please; and, between ourselves, when you are admitted into a family they need not be very fastidious in receiving others. Their daughter is notorious. I will not believe, I will not deny all that is said of her; but you will agree that these parents ought to have bethought themselves sooner of becoming jealous of the honour of their daughter. Must I speak out fairly? They have taken me for a downright ninny, whom they flattered themselves with leading by the nose to the feet of the parson of the parish. They, however, are mistaken. I think Mademoiselle Agatha charming. She has turned my head, and I believe it

appears pretty clear, from the enormous expence which she has led me to incur. I do not refuse to continue; but, again I insist that it must be with the certainty of finding her in future a little less severe. I do not propose to waste eternally at her feet my time, fortune, and a fondness which elsewhere I could employ to better advantage. You will repeat these last words to Mademoiselle Agatha, and all the preceding part of what I have said to her parents. Our connection must either cease, or I must be admitted upon a new footing, and Mademoiselle Agatha must treat me something better than she has hitherto done. When you introduced me into her family, confess, Chevalier, that you taught me to hope for condescensions which I have not experienced. Chevalier, you have a little imposed upon me.

—On my faith, says the Chevalier, I am indeed the first who was deceived. Who the devil would have imagined that with the gaudy air, the gay and easy temper of this giddy, young girl, she would prove a little dragon of virtue?

J A M E S.

How, the devil! Sir, this is very strong. You have been a man of courage then once in your life?

M A S T E R.

Ah, such days as those sometimes occur. The adventures of the usurers, my retreat at Saint John de Labran from the search of Miss Bridoie, and more than all, the rigour of Mademoiselle Agatha, hung upon my mind. I was a little tired with being bamboozled.

J A M E S.

And after this courageous discourse addressed to your dear friend, the Chevalier St. Ouin, what did you do ?

M A S T E R.

I kept my word, and withdrew my visits.

J A M E S.

Bravo ! bravo ! mio caro maestro !

M A S T E R.

A fortnight passed without my hearing any thing of them, except by means of the Chevalier, who faithfully apprised me of the effects my absence had produced in the family and who encouraged me to remain firm. He would say to me: They begin to be surprised,
they

they look, they speak, and they question each other upon the subject of disgust which you may have received. The little girl assumes dignity; she says with an affected indifference, through which it is easy to see that she is piqued : We never see that gentleman now, it seems as if he meant no longer to pay us a visit; with all my heart, that's his concern . . . And then she gives her head a toss, begins a singing, goes to the window, returns, but with her eyes red; every body perceives that she has been crying.—Crying !—Then she sits down, takes her work, affects to be busy, but can do nothing. We talk, she is silent; we try to divert her, she becomes ill humoured. We propose to play; to walk; to go to the theatre; she accepts the invitation, and when every thing is ready, she prefers something else, with

I 4

which

which again the next moment she is displeased . . . Oh ! do not you see that she is troubled ! I will tell you no more.—But, Chevalier, you believe then that if I should again make my appearance . . . — I believe you would be a fool. You must persist, you must exert courage. If you return, without being recalled, you are ruined. You must teach these low people life.—But if they should not-recall me ?—They will recall you.—Should they greatly protract the period of my recall ?—You will be recalled very soon. Zounds ! A man like you is not easily replaced. If you return of yourself they will frown, they will make you pay dearly for the quarrel ; they will impose upon you any law they prescribe ; you will be obliged to submit ; you will be forced to bend. Do you wish to be master or slave, and
to

to be the worst treated of slaves? Chuse. To deal candidly with you, your conduct has been a little careless, and it was impossible to infer from it that you were smitten, but what is done cannot be recalled, and we must not fail to improve it if it can at all afford any advantage.—She cried!—Aye, well she cried. It is better however that she should cry than you.—But if they should not recall me?—You will be recalled, I tell you. When I pay them a visit I speak no more of you than if you did not exist. They wind round me, and I allow them to go on; at last they ask if I have seen you, I answer carelessly, sometimes yes, sometimes no; then they talk of something else but they quickly recur to your absence. The first word comes from the father, the mother, the aunt, or from Agatha, and they say: After all the attentions we have

have paid him! the interest we took in his last affair! the marks of friendship shewn him by my niece! The politeness with which I treated him! So many professions of attachment that we have received from him! After all this can you trust men! . . . After this open your door to those who solicit your acquaintance! . . . reckon upon friends!—And Agatha?—Consternation prevails in the family, that I assure you.—And Agatha?—Agatha takes me aside, and says: Chevalier, can you conceive the meaning of your friend's conduct? You have so often assured me that I was beloved; you, doubtless, believed, and why should you not have believed it? I seriously believed it, I And then she stops short, her voice falters, her eyes moisten with tears Ha! do not you see that you do the same! I will tell you no more, I
am

am determined. I see what you wish but it cannot be, it absolutely cannot. Since you have committed the folly of withdrawing without rhyme or reason; I do not wish you to double it by going to throw yourself at their mercy. We must improve this incident to advance your affair with Mademoiselle Agatha, and she must see that she does not hold you so fast as to preclude the danger of losing you, unless she employs better means to retain you. After what you have done, to condescend again to kiss her hand! But now lay your hand upon your heart; we are friends, and you may, without indiscretion, explain yourself with me; really have you never obtained anything?—No—You deny, you affect delicacy.—I might do so, perhaps, had I reason, but I protest I have not the happiness to lie.—That is inconceivable, for
in

in truth you do not want address. What! Have you never found the least moment of weakness?—No.—It must have come, however, and you have not observed it, and it has passed unimproved. I am afraid you have been a little simple, it is a fault to which persons virtuous, delicate and tender, like you, are subject.—But you, Chevalier, said I, what do you there?—Nothing.—You never entertained any pretensions?—Pardon me, if you please; they even lasted a pretty long time, but you came, you saw, and conquered. I perceived that you engrossed every look, that I seldom enjoyed a glance, and I considered the point as decided. We have remained good friends; sometimes I am the confident of your little thoughts, sometimes my advice is followed, and, for want of better, I have accepted the
subal-

subaltern part to which you have reduced me.

J A M E S.

Sir, there are two things you must observe. One is that I have never been able to pursue my history without being interrupted by some devil or other, while your's proceeds in a continued progress. Mark the course of life; one runs through the brambles without being torn, in vain another examines ever step he takes, he finds briers in the smoothest way, and arrives at the end of his journey flayed alive.

M A S T E R.

And have you forgot your old theme, the grand register, and what is decreed on high?

JAMES

J A M E S.

The other point is, that I persist in the idea that your Chevalier Saint Ouin is a great knave, and that, after having shared your money with the usurers, le Brun, Merval, Matthew de Fourgeot, or Fourgeot de Matthew, and la Bridoise, he wishes to saddle you with his mistress, very honestly and honourably to be sure; that is by the assistance of the notary and the parson, in order to share with you the favours of your wife Oh! oh! my throat!

M A S T E R.

Do you know that you have now done a thing very common and very impertinent?

J A M E S.

Of such things I am very capable.

2

M A S T E R.

M A S T E R.

You complain of being interrupted,
and you interrupt others.

J A M E S.

It is the effect of the bad example
you have given me. A mother wishes
to coquet and desires her daughter to be
reserved. A father wishes to be a
spendthrift, and his son to be economi-
cal; a master wishes . . .

M A S T E R.

To interrupt his servant, interrupt
him as much as he pleases, and not to
be interrupted himself.

Reader, are you not afraid of seeing
renewed here the scene which happen-
ed at the inn, when one cried: You
shall

shall go down stairs, and the other, I will not go down stairs. I may, if I please, make you hear the exclamations of: I will interrupt; You shall not interrupt. Certain it is that with a very little provocation to James or his Master the quarrel is fairly begun, and once begun who knows how it will end? But the truth is that James modestly answered his Master: Sir, I do not interrupt you, I only chat with you as you have given me permission.

M A S T E R.

Well, I will wave that, but this is not all.

J A M E S.

What other impropriety may I have committed?

M A S T E R.

You go on anticipating the relation, and you deprive him of the pleasure
which

which he promised himself from your surprise, and having, by a very unseasonable ostentation of sagacity, guessed what he had to tell you, he has no other resource but to be silent, an alternative which I now embrace.

J A M E S.

Ah! my Master!

M A S T E R.

A plague on your men of wit!

J A M E S.

With all my heart; but you will not be so cruel as

M A S T E R.

Acknowledge, at least, that you would deserve it.

J A M E S.

I do; but after all this, you will pull out your watch to see what o'clock it is; you will take your pinch of snuff; your spleen will cease, and you will continue your history.

M A S T E R.

This fellow here does whatever he pleases with me . . . Some days after this conversation with the Chevalier, he again made his appearance at my lodgings, with an air of triumph. Well, my friend, said he, another time will you trust my prognostications? I have often told you that we were strongest; and look here is a letter from the tit; yes, a letter from herself. : This letter was very kind, mingled with some reproaches, complaints,

plaints, *et cætera* ; and again I was reinstalled in the family.

Reader, you here throw down the book ; what is the matter ? Ah ! I suspect the cause, you wish to see this letter. Madame Riccoboni would not have failed to present you with it. And that which Madame de la Pommeraye dictated to the two devotees, I am sure you have regretted. Although it was far more difficult than that of Agatha, and though I do not presume infinitely upon my talents, I believe I could have acquitted myself pretty well of the task ; but it would not have been original. It would have been like those sublime harangues of Titus Livius, in his Roman History, or Cardinal Bentivoglio, in his Wars of Flanders. They are read with pleasure, but they banish the illusion.

sion. An historian who supplies the characters with speeches which they never uttered, may likewise ascribe to them actions which they never performed. I entreat you therefore to dispense with these two letters and to resume the book.

M A S T E R.

They asked me why I had vanished, I told them whatever occurred first, they were satisfied with my excuse, and every thing resumed its accustomed course.

J A M E S.

That is to say you continued your expence, and your love affair never advanced a step the farther.

M A S T E R.

The Chevalier asked me how matters proceeded, and he had the air of being out of temper at their situation.

JAMES.

J A M E S.

And perhaps he was really out of temper.

M A S T E R.

And why so?

J A M E S.

Why? Because he

M A S T E R.

Well, finish what you were going to say.

J A M E S.

I will take good care of that; we must allow the narrator

M A S T E R.

I am happy to see you profit by my lessons . . . One day the Chevalier pro-

posed an excursion by ourselves. We went to spend the day in the country. We set out early. We dined at an inn, and staid supper; the wine was excellent, we drank plentifully, talking of government, religion, and gallantry. Never had the Chevalier testified for me so much confidence and friendship. He recounted all the adventures of his life with incredible frankness, concealing neither the good nor the bad. He drank, he embraced me, he wept with tenderness. I drank, I embraced him, I shed tears in my turn. There was only a single action in his past conduct with which he could reproach himself, and the remorse of which he would carry with him to his grave.—Come, Chevalier, said I, unburthen your mind to a friend, it will afford you ease. What is the matter? What peccadillo

cadillo is this of which your delicacy exaggerates the importance?—No, no, exclaimed the Chevalier, leaning his head upon his hands, and concealing his face with shame, it is an enormity, an unpardonable enormity. Could you have believed it? I, the Chevalier de Saint-Ouin, have once deceived deceived, yes, deceived his friend!—And how?—Alas, we both of us frequented the same house, like you and me. There was in the family a young lady, like Mademoiselle Agatha; he was in love with her, and I possessed her affections. He ruined himself in expences to gain her, while I enjoyed her favours. I never had the courage to make the confession to him, but if we should again meet I will tell him all. This dreadful secret, which I bear in the recesses of my heart, weighs me
K 4 down.

down. It is a burden of which I must absolutely be delivered.—Chevalier, you will act right.—You advise me to do so?—Assuredly I do.—And how do you imagine my friend must receive the confession?—If he is your friend; if he is just, he will find your excuse in himself; he will be affected by your candour and your repentance, he will throw his arms round your neck, he will do what I, myself, should do in his situation.—You believe so?—I do.—And this is the manner in which you would treat him?—I have no doubt of it . . .—At this instant the Chevalier rose, advanced to me with tears in his eyes, his arms spread, and said: My friend, then embrace me.—What, Chevalier, said I, it is you? It is I? it is that devil Agatha?—Yes, my friend, I again liberate you from your word, you have it

it in your power to treat me as you please. If you think as I do, that my offence admits of no excuse, refuse me your pardon, rise, quit me, never again behold me but with contempt, and abandon me to my grief and to my shame. Ah! my friend, did you know all the empire which that little profligate has usurped over my heart! I was born virtuous; judge then how much I have suffered from the performance of the unworthy part to which I have been degraded. How often have I turned my eyes from her to fix them upon you, groaning for her treachery and my own! It is most wonderful that you never perceived it . . . All this time I remained as unmoveable as a statue; but when I had heard the whole speech of the Chevalier, I exclaimed, Ah! base! base Chevalier! you, you my friend?

friend ?—Yes, I was your friend, and still I am so, since, to extricate you from the chains of this creature, I dispose of a secret which is more hers than mine. What completes my regret is that you never have obtained any favour which could compensate for what you have done to gain possession of her. (*Here James began to laugh and whistle*).

But there is *truth in the wine* of Collé Reader, you do not know what you say. From an anxiety to display your wit, you only shew your imbecility. There is so little truth in the wine, that, on the contrary, there is falsehood in the wine. I have said a rude thing to you ; I am sorry for it, and I ask your pardon.

MASTER.

M A S T E R.

My resentment subsided by degrees. I embraced the Chevalier, he sat down again on his chair, his elbows leaning upon the table, his hands covering his eyes. He durst not look at me.

J A M E S.

He was so afflicted, and you had the goodness to console him? . . . (*here James whistled again*).

M A S T E R.

The conduct which appeared to me the best, was to turn the affair into jest. At every gay observation I made, the Chevalier, confounded, said to me; There is not another man in the world like you. You are perfectly singular. You are infinitely superior to me. I
3 doubt

doubt whether I should have possessed the generosity or the force of mind to pardon you such an injury, and you treat it as a subject of pleasantry. This is without example. My friend, what can I ever do to repair my crime? . . .

Ah ! no, no, this can admit of no reparation. Never, never, shall I forget either my crime or your indulgence, they are two traits deeply engraved upon my heart. I will recall the one to excite a detestation of myself, the other to inspire an admiration of you, and to redouble the attachment to you with which I am penetrated.—Come, Chevalier, you do not consider the matter rightly, you exaggerate both your own conduct and mine. Let us drink your health. Mine then, Chevalier, since you will not hear of your own . . . By degrees the Chevalier recovered his
spirits.

spirits. He recounted to me all the details of his treachery, loading himself with the most odious epithets. He tore in pieces the daughter, the mother, the father, the aunts and the whole family, whom he represented as a miscreant crew, unworthy of me, but very worthy of him; these were his own words.

J A M E S.

Look you now, this is the very reason why I advise women never to intrigue with men who drink to excess. I despise this Chevalier of yours, no less for his indiscretion in love than for his perfidy in friendship. What the devil! He has nothing more to do then to be an honest man and speak to you at first But hold, sir, I must persist, he is a pitiful rascal, a downright beggarly rascal. I know not how this ad-

venture is to end. I am afraid, least in thus undeceiving you with regard to the past, he is planning some new treachery, Take me, take yourself with all convenient speed out of this inn, and the company of this fellow

MASTER, *to the Chevalier.*

After what you have told me, I expect you will never see them again.—I see them again! But what is most afflicting is to renounce them without taking vengeance. They shall have betrayed, mocked, affronted, plundered a man of honour; they shall have abused the passion and the weakness of another man of honour, for such I still venture to consider myself, in order to engage him in a scene of horrors; they shall have exposed two friends to the chance of becoming mortal enemies, and perhaps

haps of cutting each others throats; for, in truth, my friend, acknowledge that if you had discovered my base conduct; you are brave, it might have excited in your breast such a feeling of resentment—No, it should not have been carried to that extremity. And why should it have gone so far?—Why?—For a fault which no person can answer for himself that he shall not commit? Is she my wife? Though she were? Is she my daughter? No, she is a little strumpet; and do you believe that for a little strum. . . . Come, my friend, let us quit this subject. Agatha is young, lively, fair, fat, plump, the firmest flesh, has she not? And the softest skin? The possession of her must have been delicious, and I suppose you were too happy in her arms to think much of your friends.—It is certain, that if the charms
of

of the person and the temptation of pleasure could extenuate the fault, no man in the world were less culpable than me.—Ah! there, Chevalier, I draw back, I retract my indulgence, and wish to impose a condition upon the oblivion of your treachery.—Speak, my friend, command, say the word, shall I throw myself headlong out of the window, hang, drown myself, plunge this knife into my bosom? . . . And, saying this, the Chevalier seized a knife, which lay upon the table, untied his collar, opened his shirt, and, his eyes glaring wildly, placed the point of the knife at the bottom of the left collar bone, seeming only to wait my command to dispatch himself in the manner of antiquity.—That is out of the question, Chevalier, lay down that ugly knife.—I will not quit it; it is what I deserve, give the signal.—Lay down
that

that ugly knife, I say, I do not value the expiation at so high a price, I do not . . . All this time the point of the knife was suspended upon the left collar bone. I seized his hand, I tore from him the knife which I threw away, then, taking his glass and filling a bumper, I said: Let us first take a glass, and then you shall know what terrible condition I annex to your pardon. Agatha then is very liquorish, eh! very voluptuous?—Ah! my friend, do you not know it as well as I do!—But stop, we must have a bottle of Champagne, and then you shall give an account of one of your nights. Charming traitor, your absolution follows the conclusion of that account. Come, begin, what! do not you understand me?—I do understand you.—Does my sentence appear to you too severe?—No.—You are pensive.—I am.—

What did I ask of you?—The description of one of my nights with Agatha!—Just so Meanwhile the Chevalier, after measuring me with his eye from head to foot, said to himself: He is of the same size, nearly the same age, and, if there should be a little difference, in the dark, her imagination being prepossessed with the idea that it is me, she will entertain no suspicion—But, Chevalier, of what are you thinking? your glass remains full and you do not begin!—I am thinking, my friend; I have thought of it, it is all decided; embrace me, we shall be revenged, we shall. It is a piece of villainy on my part; if it is unworthy of me, it is not unworthy to be practised against that little devil. You ask me for the account of one of my nights?—Yes; is it to demand too much?—But if instead of the
account

account I should procure you the night?—That were better still.—(*James falls a whistling*). Without more ado the Chevalier pulls two keys out of his pocket, the one small, the other large, saying, the small one is the key of the street door, the large one is that of the antichamber of Agatha ; there they are ; they are both at your service. I will tell you my mode of proceeding for about six months, to which you will accommodate yours. Her windows are in front as you know. I walk about in the street till I see them lighted. A flower pot, placed on the outside, is the signal agreed upon ; then I approach the outer door ; I open it and enter ; I shut it and go up stairs as softly as I can. I turn by the little passage upon the right, where I find a small wax taper, by the light of which I undress myself at my ease.

Agatha leaves the door of her room half open, I pass and repair to her bed. Do you comprehend this?—Very well! —As there are people sleep near us we remain silent.—And then I suppose you have something better to do than to talk.—In case of accident I can leap out of bed and shut myself up in the dressing room, this however was never necessary. Our ordinary practice is to separate about four o'clock in the morning. When pleasure or repose induces us to prolong the period, we rise together. She goes down stairs, I dress myself, I read, or repose, waiting till the time arrives when I may appear. I go down stairs, and embrace her as though I had just come in.—And are you expected to night?—I am expected every night.—And will you resign me your place? —With all my heart. That you will prefer

prefer the night to the description, I have no doubt, but what I should wish, is, that . . . —Go on, there are few things which I do not feel sufficient courage to attempt to oblige you.—And this is that you should remain in her arms till day. I will come and surprise you.—Oh, no! Chevalier, that will be too bad.--Too bad? Oh, no, not so bad as you may imagine. In the first place I will undress myself in the wardrobe.—Come, come, Chevalier, the devil is in you. Besides this is impossible. If you give me the keys they cannot be returned to procure you admittance.—Ah! my friend, how dull you are!—Not in this case, methinks.—And why cannot we enter both together? You may go to Agatha, whilst I remain in the wardrobe till you make the signal agreed on.—Upon my faith, this is so pleasant, so whimsical,

L 3

that

that I am almost induced to consent. But, Chevalier, all things well considered, I should like better to reserve this piece of humour for one of the following nights.—Ah ! I understand. Your plan is to avenge yourself more than once.—Ay, with your consent ? —I agree most willingly.

J A M E S.

Your Chevalier confounds all my conjectures. I imagined . . .

M A S T E R.

You imagined ?

J A M E S.

No, sir, you may continue.

MASTER.

M A S T E R.

We drank, we uttered a hundred extravagances, both with regard to the event of the approaching night, the following ones, and that when Agatha should find herself placed between the Chevalier and me. The Chevalier had resumed the most captivating gaiety; and the subject of our conversation was now no longer melancholy. He prescribed to me precepts for my conduct during the night, which were not all equally easy to follow. But, after a long train of nights well employed, I was always to support the honour of the Chevalier; then followed endless details upon the talents, the perfections, and the excellencies of Agatha. With incredible

art the Chevalier added the intoxication of passion to that of wine. The moment of the enterprise or of vengeance seemed to us to arrive very slowly. We, however, rose from table. The Chevalier paid the reckoning for the first time. We mounted our carriage : we were drunk : our coachman and servants were still more so than we.

Reader, may not I here, if I please, throw the coachman, the horses, the carriage, masters and servants, all together into a quagmire ? If you are afraid of the quagmire, who can hinder me from carrying them safe and sound to town, - where I may entangle their carriage with another, which I may fill with a party of drunken young men ? Offensive expressions may be employed, a quarrel ensue, swords drawn, and
a brawl

a brawl managed with all its proper accompaniments ? If you dislike brawls, may I not substitute to these young gentlemen, Mademoiselle Agatha and one of her aunts ? But nothing of all this really happened. The Chevalier and James's Master arrived at Paris. The latter dressed himself in the Chevalier's clothes. It is midnight ; they are now under Agatha's windows ; the light is extinguished ; the flower-pot appears. They take another turn along the street, the Chevalier inculcating his lesson upon his friend. They approach the door, the Chevalier opens it, introduces James's Master, keeps the key of the street door, gives him the key of the passage, again closes the outer door, departs, and after this little detail related very laconically, James's Master continued.

The

The place was familiar to me. I mount upon tiptoe, I open the door of the passage, I shut it again. I enter the wardrobe, where I find the little wax taper, I undress myself; the door of the room was half open; I pass on, proceed to the alcove bed where Agatha was awake. I open the curtains, and immediately I feel two naked arms thrown round my neck, and drawing me forwards; I follow; I get into bed, am loaded with caresses, which I return. Conceive me then the happiest of mankind. Again I renew my happiness, when . . .

James's Master perceived that James was asleep, or at least pretended to be so. You sleep, said he, you sleep, rascal, at the most interesting moment of my history! . . . And it was in this very

place that James expected to be observed by his Master.—Will you awake?—I don't think I shall.—Why?—Because if I awake, my sore throat may awake also, and I think it better for both to repose . . . Saying this, James let his head incline forwards.—You are going to break your neck.—No doubt, if it is decreed on high. Are you not in the arms of Mademoiselle Agatha?—Yes.—Don't you find yourself very well?—Very well.—Remain where you are.—I must remain there; you are pleased to say so.—At least till I am acquainted with the history of Desgland's plaister.

M A S T E R.

You take your revenge, traitor.

JAMES

J A M E S.

And suppose I did, my Master, after having cut the thread of my amours by a thousand questions, by as many whimsies, without the smallest murmur on my part, might not I intreat you to interrupt yours ; to acquaint me with the history of the plaister of good Desglands, to whom I have so many obligations, who rescued me out of the surgeon's house, at the moment when, destitute of money, I no longer knew of any resource to which I could apply, and in whose family I formed acquaintance with Denise ; Denise, without whom I should not have had a word to say in the whole course of our travels ? My Master, my dear Master, the history of Desgland's plaister :
you

you may be as concise as you please ; meanwhile the drowsiness which possesses me, and by which I am overpowered, will be dissipated, and you may reckon upon my whole attention.

M A S T E R

(Shrugging up his shoulders).

In the neighbourhood of Desglands, there lived a charming widow who possessed many qualities in common with a celebrated courtesan of the last ages. Virtuous by reason, licentious by constitution ; grieving in the morning for the follies of the preceding night, she passed her whole life in the alternate progress from pleasure to remorse, and from remorse to pleasure ; while neither the habit of pleasure could extinguish remorse, nor the feel-

ings of remorse extinguish the taste for pleasure. I knew her in her last moments. She would then say, that at last she was about to escape from her two grand enemies. Her husband, indulgent to the only defect with which he could reproach her, pitied her while she lived, and lamented her long after her death. He pretended that it would have been equally ridiculous to prevent his wife from loving as to prevent her from drinking. He pardoned her the multitude of her conquests, on account of the delicate choice with which her favours were conferred. She never accepted the homage of a fool or a knave ; her favours were always the reward of talents or of probity. To say of a man, that he had been her lover, was to affirm, that he was a man of merit. As she was sensible of her own

in-

inconstancy, she never pledged herself to be faithful. I never in my life, would she say, made but one false oath, and that was the first.

Whether it was, that her lovers lost the sentiments they had conceived for her ; whether it was that she lost the feeling with which she had been inspired, they ever remained her friends. Never was there a more striking example of the difference between probity and morals. It was impossible for you to say she had morals, yet you would acknowledge that it was impossible to find a more virtuous creature. Her priest rarely saw her at the foot of the altar, but he always found her purse open for the poor. She would pleasantly say of religion and law, that they were a pair of crutches which it
would

would not do to take from those who had weak limbs. The wives who dreaded her acquaintance for their husbands, desired it for their children.

J A M E S

*(after having muttered between his teeth,
I shall be even with you for this cursed
portrait).*

You have been doatingly in love with this same woman ?

M A S T E R.

I certainly should have become so if Desglands had not got the start of me. Desglands fell in love with her.

J A M E S.

Pray, sir, is the history of his plaister and the history of his amours so closely
con-

connected that they cannot be separated ?

M A S T E R.

They may be separated. The plai-ster is an incident—the history is the recital of every thing that passed while they entertained a mutual passion for each other.

J A M E S.

And did there a great many incidents occur ?

M A S T E R.

Many.

J A M E S.

In that case, if you give each of them the same space as the portrait of the heroine, we shan't have done before the day of Pentecost ; and it is all over with your amours and mine.

VOL. III.

M

MASTER.

MASTER.

If so, James, why did you carry me out of my course? . . . Have you seen, at the house of Desglands, a little child?

JAMES.

Mischievous, obstinate, insolent, and sickly? Yes, I have seen it.

MASTER.

That is the natural child of Desglands and the beautiful widow.

JAMES.

That child will give him abundance of vexation. He is an only child, a good reason for his being a worthless rogue; he knows he will be rich, and that's another reason for his being nothing but a worthless rogue.

MASTER.

M A S T E R.

And as he is sickly, he is taught nothing ; he is never constrained, never contradicted upon any occasion ; a third good reason for his being nothing but a worthless rogue.

J A M E S.

One night the little wretch began crying most inhumanly. The whole family was in alarm. They ran to him. He wished his papa to rise.—Your papa is asleep, said they.—No matter ; he must rise. I desire it—He is sick.—No matter ; he must rise : I desire it, I desire it . . I desire it . . Desglands was awakened, and throwing his night-gown over his shoulders, arrived, saying, Well, my little dear, here I am ; what do you want ?—I want them all here—

—Who?—Every body in the castle.—
They were brought; masters, servants,
strangers, domestics, Jean, Denise, my-
self with my sore knee, all except an
impotent housekeeper, to whom a retreat
had been granted in a cottage near a
quarter of a league from the castle. He
desired them to go and seek her also.—
But, said Desglands, my child, it is
midnight.—I don't care for that, I
wish it.—You know she lives far off.—
I wish it, I insist on it.—That she is
old, and cannot walk.—She shall come.
—The housekeeper was at last sent for
and brought; for she could as soon have
eaten the road as have walked. When
we were all assembled, he wished to
rise and be dressed, which was accord-
ingly done; and he made us all pass
through the grand saloon, where he
placed himself in the middle, in his
papa's

papa's great arm chair. Every thing was complied with. He took us all by the hand, and wished us all to dance. This was likewise agreed to, and we all set a dancing like mad folks. But the rest is incredible . . .

M A S T E R.

I hope you will excuse me the rest ?

J A M E S.

No, no, sir, you shall hear the rest.—He imagines that he is to give me, with impunity, a portrait of the mother, four yards long

M A S T E R.

I spoil you, James.

J A M E S.

So much the worse for you.

M 3

MASTER.

MASTER.

The long and tedious portrait of the widow sticks in your stomach, but, believe me, you have well repaid me for that *ennui* by the long and tedious account of the caprices of the child.

JAMES.

If you are of that opinion resume the history of the father; but no more portraits, my Master; I hate portraits like the very devil.

MASTER.

And why do you hate portraits?

JAMES.

Because they have so little resemblance, that if, by chance, we meet
with

with the originals, we are unable to recognize them. Relate me facts, render to me, with fidelity, conversations, and I shall soon know with what kind of man I have to do. From a word, a gesture, I have sometimes gathered more than from the babbling of a whole town.

MASTER.

One day, Desglands . . .

JAMES.

When you are absent, I sometimes go into your library, I take up a book, and it is usually a book of history

MASTER.

One day, Desglands . . .

M 4

JAMES.

J A M E S.

I read all the portraits with my thumb.

M A S T E R.

One day, Desglands

J A M E S.

Pardon, my Master, the machine was wound up and it must needs have run quite out.

M A S T E R,

Is it now run out ?

J A M E S.

It is.

M A S T E R.

One day Desglands invited the beautiful widow, and some gentlemen of the neigh-

neighbourhood to dinner. The reign of Desglands was upon the decline, and among his guests there was one to whom her inconstancy began to lean. At table Desglands and his rival sat next to each other, and opposite the beautiful widow. Desglands displayed all his wit to animate the conversation, he addressed the widow in the most gallant train, but her mind was occupied with other thoughts, she did not attend to what he said and kept her eyes fixed upon his rival. Desglands had a fresh egg in his hand; a convulsive emotion of jealousy seizing him, he clenched his fists, and forcing the contents of the egg out of the shell, he spread it copiously over the face of his neighbour. The latter raised his hand in the attitude to strike. Desglands seizes his fist, stops it, and whispers in his ear; sir, I hold it as received . . .

ved . . . a profound silence ensued, the beautiful widow was seized with a sudden illness. The repast was gloomy and short. When they rose from table she sent for Desglands and his rival into a separate apartment. Every thing that a woman could do with decency to reconcile them, she practised; she entreated, she wept, she swooned, and in good earnest too. She pressed Desglands' hands, she turned her eyes, streaming with tears, upon the other. To the latter she said: And you love me! . . . to the former: And you have loved me! . . . to both: And you wish to ruin me, to render me the talk, the subject of the hatred and contempt of the whole province! Whichever shall deprive his adversary of life, I will see him no more, he can neither be my friend nor my lover, I vow against him a hatred that

that shall end only with my life . . . Then she again fell into a swoon, and, as she fainted, she said : Cruel, that you are, draw your swords and plunge them into my bosom ; if, expiring, I can see you embrace, I shall die without regret ! . . . Desglands and his rival remained motionless or only administered their assistance, and some tears stole from their eyes. They were now obliged to separate. They conducted the beautiful widow back to her house more dead than alive.

J A M E S.

Heyday, sir, what need had I of the portrait which you gave me of this woman ? Should I not now have known every thing you told me ?

MASTER.

M A S T E R.

The next morning Desglands paid a visit to his charming inconstant where he found his rival. Judge the astonishment of both when they saw, upon Desglands' right cheek, a large round black patch? What is the meaning of that, said the widow?—It is nothing, said Desglands.—A pimple, said his rival.—It will go off, said Desglands—After a moment's conversation, Desglands took his leave, and, as he went away, he made a signal to his rival, which was perfectly well understood. The latter went down stairs instantly, into the street, he taking the one side, whilst Desglands took the other. They met behind the gardens of the beautiful widow, they fought, and the rival of Desglands remained stretched upon
upon

upon the spot, severely, though not mortally wounded. While he was carried home Desglands returned to the house of the widow, he sat down, and again talked of the accident that had happened the preceding evening. She demanded the meaning of that enormous and ridiculous patch which covered his cheek. He arose, and looking in the mirror, said, in truth, I do think it a little too large . . . Begging the lady's scissars, he took off the plaister, pared it all round a breadth or two and replaced it, saying to the widow : what do you think of me now!—Only a breadth or two less ridiculous than before, replied she—Well, that is something, at least !

Desglands' rival recovered. A second duel took place, in which Desglands was again victorious, and so five

or six times successively, and after every combat, Desglands continued to pare off a little piece of his patch and to replace the remainder upon his cheek.

J A M E S.

What was the end of this adventure? When I was carried to the castle of Desglands, I think that he no longer wore the large black plaister.

M A S T E R.

No. The end of this adventure was that of the beautiful widow. The long anxiety which it occasioned her completed the ruin of her weak and precarious state of health.

J A M E S.

And Desglands?

MASTER.

M A S T E R.

One day as we were taking a walk together he received a letter, which he opened and said: He was a brave man, but I cannot be afflicted at his death . . . At that instant he tore from his cheek the black plaister which frequent parings had now reduced to the size of an ordinary patch. Such is the story of Desglands.—Is James now satisfied, and may I hope that he will listen to the narrative of my amours or resume the history of his own?

J A M E S.

Neither the one nor the other.

M A S T E R.

And what is the reason?

J A M E S.

Because it is hot and I am weary; this place is delightful, we may enjoy the shade of these trees, and we may repose on the cool bank of this stream.

M A S T E R.

I consent, but your sore throat

J A M E S.

Proceeds from heat, and physicians say that contraries are cured by contraries.

M A S T E R.

That holds true in morals as well as physics. I have remarked one circumstance singular enough which is that there are few maxims in morals, of which they do not make an aphorism
in

in medicine, and reciprocally few medical aphorisms, of which they do not make a maxim in morals.

J A M E S.

And very properly too.

They dismount, and stretch themselves upon the grass. James said to his Master: Sir, will you watch or sleep? If you watch I will sleep, if you sleep I will watch.—Sleep, sleep, said his Master.—I may then reckon upon your watching? Else, this time, perhaps, we may lose two horses.

The Master pulled out his watch and his snuff box. James composed himself to sleep; but at almost every instant he awoke in surprise flapping his hands,

his Master exclaiming ; what the devil is the matter with you ?

J A M E S.

I am infested with the gnats and flies ; I would give a good deal to know the use of these troublesome insects.

M A S T E R.

And because you do not know, you think they are good for nothing ? Nature has made nothing that is useless or superfluous.

J A M E S.

I believe so ; for since a thing is, it must needs be.

M A S T E R.

When you are too full of blood, or when it is bad, what do you do ? You
apply

apply to a surgeon, who takes from you two or three cups full. Well, these very gnats, of which you complain, are a host of little winged surgeons that come with their little lancets to sting you and to draw your blood drop by drop.

J A M E S.

Yes, but quite at random, without knowing whether I have too much or too little. Bring here a person in a consumption, and you will see whether those little winged surgeons will not sting him. They mind themselves, and every thing in nature regards itself, and nothing but itself. If they injure others, they care not, provided they derive advantage from it themselves. . . . Then he flapped his hands again in the air, and said: the Devil take these little winged surgeons!

M A S T E R.

Do you know the fable of Garo*?

J A M E S.

Yes.

M A S T E R.

And what is your opinion of it?

J A M E S.

I think it bad.

M A S T E R.

That is easily said.

J A M E S.

And easily proved. If instead of acorns the oak had produced pumpkins, would this ass, Garo, have fallen asleep under an oak? And if he had not fallen

* See the Fables of la Fontaine,

asleep

asleep under an oak, what would it have mattered, to the safety of his nose, whether it had rained pumpkins or acorns? Such reading is fit only for children.

M A S T E R.

A philosopher of your name thinks differently.

J A M E S.

Every one has his own opinion, and John James is not James.

M A S T E R.

And so much the worse for James.

J A M E S.

Who knows that, before we reach the last word of the last line of the page we occupy in the grand register?

M A S T E R.

Of what are you thinking ?

J A M E S.

I am thinking, that while you spoke and I answered, you spoke to me without any previous determination of the will, and that I answered you without any previous determination of my will.

M A S T E R.

What then ?

J A M E S.

What then ? We are two mere machines that live and think.

M A S T E R.

But, at present, what does your will point to ?

JAMES.

J A M E S.

Upon my faith it is just as I said before. In the two machines there is only an additional spring in play.

M A S T E R.

And what may this spring be?

J A M E S.

The devil take me if I know how it can play without a cause. My captain would say: Let a cause be given and an effect is produced; from a feeble cause follows a feeble effect; from a momentary cause arises a momentary effect; from an intermittent cause an intermittent effect; from a thwarted cause a diminished effect; and from a cause that ceases to operate, no effect at all.

N 4

MASTER.

MASTER.

But it appears to me that I feel within myself, that I am free, as I feel that I think.

JAMES.

My captain would say: Yes, at present, when you will nothing; but can you will so as to throw yourself headlong from your horse?

MASTER.

Very well, then I will throw myself headlong.

JAMES.

Cheerfully, and without repugnance? without effort, as when you have a mind to dismount at the door of an inn?

MASTER.

M A S T E R.

Not quite so; but of what consequence is that, provided I throw myself headlong and prove that I am free?

J A M E S.

My captain would say: What! do not you see that without my contradiction it never would have come into your head to break your neck? It is I then who take you by the foot and throw you from your saddle. If your fall prove any thing, it is not that you are free, but that you are mad. My captain would say farther, that the enjoyment of a liberty which could be exercised without a motive, would be the true character of a maniac.

MASTER.

M A S T E R.

That is too much for me; but in spite of your captain and you, I will believe that I will when I will.

J A M E S.

But if you are, and always have been, the master of your own will; why do not you, at present, will to love an ugly woman, and why did you not cease to love Agatha as often as your pride prompted you? My Master, we pass three-fourths of our lives in willing what we never perform.

M A S T E R.

That is true.

J A M E S.

And in doing what we never will.

M A S T E R.

MASTER,

And will you demonstrate this to me?

JAMES,

If you consent to hear.

MASTER,

I consent.

JAMES,

That shall be done ; but let us speak of something else

After this idle stuff, and other conversation of the same importance, they were silent, and James lifted up his enormous hat, which served as an umbrella against the rain and a parasol in warm weather, a kerchief in all seasons, and the gloomy sanctuary in which one
of

of the best heads that ever existed was wont to consult destiny upon great occasions. When the borders of this hat were cocked up, his visage seemed placed nearly in the middle of his body, when they were slouched scarcely could he see ten paces before him, a circumstance that had given him the habit of poking his nose up in the air, and then you might say of his hat: *Os illi sublime dedit cælumque tueri jussit, et erectos ad sidera tollere vultus.*

James then cocking up the borders of his enormous hat, and casting his eyes around, perceived a labourer, who in vain whipped one of the horses that was yoked to his plough. This horse, young and strong, had lain down in the ridge, and the labourer, to no purpose, shook him by the bridle, coaxed, caressed, threatened,

threatened, swore and beat; the animal remained immoveable, and obstinately refused to rise.

James, after musing awhile upon this scene, observed to his Master, whose attention it had also attracted: Do you see, sir, what is going on there?

M A S T E R.

And what else would you have to be going on more than I see?

J A M E S.

Do you guess nothing?

M A S T E R.

No. And pray, what do you guess, eh?

3

JAMES.

J A M E S.

I guess that this foolish, proud, sluggish animal is an inhabitant of the town, who become haughty in consequence of his first situation as a riding horse, despises the plough ; and, to say all in one word, that it is your horse, the symbol of your humble servant James, and so many other lazy rogues like him, who have left the country, to come and wear livery in town, and who would rather beg bread in the streets, or die of hunger, than return to agriculture, the most useful and the most honourable of all employments.

The Master fell a laughing ; and James, addressing himself to the labourer, who was not within hearing, said ; Poor devil ! goad him, goad him
him

him as much as you please ; his habits are now formed, and you will wear out more than one whip before you can inspire that rascal with a little real dignity and some taste for labour . . . The Master continued to laugh. James, half in anger, half in pity, arose and advanced to the labourer — scarcely had he taken two hundred steps, when, returning back to his Master, he cried out, Sir, make haste, make haste, it is your horse.

It was so in fact. No sooner had the animal recognized James and his Master than he got up and shook his mane, neighed, reared and kindly applied his muzzle to that of his comrade. Meanwhile James, indignant, muttered between his teeth, Oh you lazy, good for nothing sluggard, what hinders

hinders me from banging you soundly with my boots? . . . His Master, on the contrary, kissed him, stroaked his hand along his side, clapped him on the crupper with the other, and, almost weeping with joying, exclaimed, My horse, my poor horse! I have then at last recovered you!

The labourer understood nothing of all this. I see, gentlemen, said he, that this horse has belonged to you, but he came into my possession not the less honestly on that account; I bought him at the last fair. If you will take him back for two-thirds of what he cost me, you will do me a particular service; for I can make nothing of him. Whenever we take him out of the stable we have the devil and all to do, and when he is to be yoked, it is worse. When he
comes

comes to the field, he lies down ; and he would rather be beaten to death than give a single pull, or suffer a sack on his back. Gentlemen, will you be so charitable as to rid me of this cursed animal ? He is handsome, but he is good for nothing but to prance under a gentleman, and that does not suit me An exchange was proposed between this and either of the other two that would best answer his purpose ; he consented, the bargain was made and settled, and our two travellers slowly returned to the place where they had rested, from whence they saw with satisfaction the horse the labourer had taken accommodate himself without reluctance to his new situation.

J. A. M. E. S.

Well ! now, sir ?

MASTER.

Very well, indeed ; nothing is more certain than that you are inspired ; whether it is by God, or by the devil, I do not know. Ah ! James, my dear friend, I fear much you are possessed by the devil.

JAMES.

And why the devil ?

MASTER.

Because you perform prodigies ; while your doctrine is very suspicious.

JAMES.

And what connection is there between the doctrine a man professes and the prodigies which he performs ?

MASTER.

M A S T E R.

I see you have never read Dom la Taste *.

J A M E S.

And this Dom la Taste, whom I never have read, what says he?

M A S T E R.

He says, that God and the devil equally work miracles.

J A M E S.

And how are you to distinguish the miracles of God from the miracles of the devil?

M A S T E R

By the doctrine. If the doctrine be good, the miracles are from God; if it

* A famous Benedictin Monk of the present century who, in his *Theological Letters*, supported the doctrine that devils could perform good miracles and operate wonderful cures as well as the divinity.

is bad, the miracles proceed from the devil.

(Here James fell a whistling.)

J A M E S.

And who is to tell me, poor ignorant wretch that I am, whether the doctrine of the worker of the miracles be good or bad? Come, let us mount our cattle. Of what consequence is it to you whether your horse has been recovered by God, or by Beelzebub? Will he ride the better or the worse for this?

M A S T E R.

No. Yet, James, if you were possessed . . .

J A M E S.

What remedy would you apply?

M A S T E R.

M A S T E R.

The remedy in expectation of your being exorcised, would be . . . would be to allow you no other beverage but holy water.

J A M E S.

I, sir, reduced to water ! James reduced to holy water !—I would rather, sir, a thousand legions of devils should remain in my body than drink a drop, holy or not holy.—What ! have you never yet perceived that I was subject to the *hydrophobia* . . .

Hydrophobia !—What, did James say hydrophobia ? . . . No, reader, no ; I confess that the word is not his. But with this severity of criticism I defy you to read a scene of comedy or tragedy, a single scene, however well executed, without

surprising the author's words in the mouth of his character. James said : What, sir, have you never perceived that the sight of water makes me mad? Very well, then in adopting a different phrase from his, I have been less faithful, but more concise.

They again mounted their horses, and James said to his Master, You had arrived at that period of your amours, when, after being twice happy, you were, perhaps, preparing to enjoy the same felicity a third time.

M A S T E R.

When suddenly the passage door flew open. The room was instantly filled with a crowd of people, who walked about tumultuously. I perceived light, and heard the voices of men and women
speaking

speaking confusedly. The curtains were forcibly thrown open, and I discovered the father, the mother, the aunts, the cousins, male and female, and a commissary, who gravely addressed them: Gentlemen and ladies, no noise; the offence is flagrant; the gentleman is a man of honour; there is only one way of repairing the mischief, and the gentleman will prefer embracing it himself rather than be constrained to it by the law. . . . At these words, he was interrupted by the father and mother, who loaded me with reproaches; by the aunts and the female cousins, who directed against Agatha epithets the least ceremonious, who, meanwhile, had wrapped herself up in the bed clothes. I was stupified, and knew not what to say. The commissary, addressing himself to me, said ironically; Sir, you are very

comfortable ; but you must nevertheless think proper to rise and dress yourself . . . which I accordingly did, but in my own clothes, which had been substituted for those of the Chevalier. A table was placed, and the commissary set about drawing up a state of the proceedings. Meanwhile the mother affected to storm so much, that she was held by four persons, to prevent her from beating her daughter ; and the father said to her, Softly, my dear, softly ; for indeed if you were to beat your daughter, you would not mend the matter ; every thing will be settled for the best . . . The other personages were dispersed upon chairs, in the different attitudes of grief, indignation and resentment. The father, scolding his wife continually, said to her, See the consequences of not watching over the
con-

conduct of your daughter . . . The mother replied : with an air so good and so virtuous, who could have believed it of this gentleman ? . . . The rest kept silence.

The account of the circumstances being drawn up, it was read to me, and, as it contained nothing but the truth, I subscribed to it, and went down stairs with the commissary, who very obligingly asked me to step into a carriage that was at the door, from whence I was conducted with a numerous retinue to the prison of Fort-l'Evêque.

JAMES.

To Fort-l'Evêque ! to prison !

MASTER.

MASTER.

To prison; and then what an abominable process ensued! They talked of nothing less than my espousing Mademoiselle Agatha. The parents would listen to no compromise. In the morning the Chevalier visited me in my retreat. He was acquainted with every thing that had happened, and took great pains to tell me the most minute trifles, saying, that Agatha was in despair; her parents were enraged; he had undergone the most cruel reproaches upon the treacherous acquaintance whom he had introduced to their family; it was he who was the first cause of their misfortune, and the dishonour of their daughter; the situation of the poor people inspired his pity; he had asked leave to speak to Agatha in private,

private, and with the utmost difficulty obtained permission; Agatha had liked to have plucked out his eyes, and had called him the most odious names; he had expected all this; he had allowed her fury to subside, after which he had endeavoured to bring her to something reasonable. But the girl said one thing, to which, added the Chevalier, I knew no answer: My father and mother have surprised me with your friend; must I tell them, that, when in bed with him, I thought I was in bed with you? . . . He answered; But, seriously, do you imagine that my friend can marry you? . . . No, said she, it is you, base, dishonourable wretch, who ought to be condemned to that alternative.—But, said I to the Chevalier, it is entirely in your power to extricate me from this
em-

embarrassment.—How so?—How? why by declaring the matter as it really is.—I threatened Agatha that I would do so, said he; but I cannot do such a thing. It is doubtful whether this method would be of advantage; and it is very certain that it would cover us with infamy. Besides, it is your fault.—My fault!—Yes, your fault, for if you had approved of the trick that I proposed, Agatha would have been surprised between two men, and the whole affair would have ended in a jest. However, as this has not been the way, we must extricate ourselves from the scrape as well as we can.—But, Chevalier, can you explain to me a little incident? It is, how my clothes came to be restored, and yours replaced in the wardrobe? Upon my soul, I have thought of it to no purpose;
it

it is a mystery which confounds me; this renders me a little suspicious of Agatha; it has occurred to me, that she has discovered the imposture, and that some connivance had subsisted between her and her parents.—Perhaps they saw you come up stairs; certain it is, that hardly were you undressed, when they sent me back my clothes and demanded yours, replied the Chevalier.—Time will clear up this mystery, said I . . .

As the Chevalier and I were grieving, consoling, accusing, reviling, and asking each other pardon, the commissary entered. The Chevalier turned pale, and abruptly retired. This commissary was a man of worth, as there are some such in the occupation, and happening to read over again, at home, the account of the proceedings which
 he

he had drawn up, he recollected that he had studied along with a young man of my name ; it had struck him, that I might, perhaps, be the relation, or even the son of his old college acquaintance ; and the fact was true. His first question was, Who was the person who had made his escape when he entered ?—He did not make his escape ; he is gone out : it is my intimate friend, the Chevalier de Saint-Ouin.—Your friend ! You have, indeed, got there a pretty friend ! Do you know, sir, that it was he himself who came and gave me notice ? He was accompanied by the father and another relation.—He !—He himself.—Are you very sure of that point ?—Perfectly sure ; but what name did you give him ?—The Chevalier de St. Ouin.—Oh ! the Chevalier de St. Ouin ; just so. And do you know
what

what your friend, your intimate friend, the Chevalier de St. Ouin, is? A sharper! a man notorious by a hundred knavish tricks! The police only allow such men to go at large, on account of the intelligence they sometimes give. They are rogues, and also informers upon rogues; and it would seem that they are more useful for the mischiefs they prevent or reveal, than hurtful by that which they perform...

I told the commissary my melancholy adventure, as it had really happened. He did not view it in a very favourable light; for every circumstance which tended to acquit me, could neither be alledged nor proved in a court of justice. He, nevertheless, undertook to call before him the father and mother, to stop the daughter's mouth, to give

the magistrate proper information, and to neglect nothing which could serve for my justification ; at the same time apprising me, that if these people were well advised, authority could do very little in the business.—

But, Mr. Commissary, said I, shall I be compelled to marry ?—Marry ! that would be too hard, and therefore I entertain little apprehension of that, quoth he, yet some compensation must be given ; and in this case it will be considerable . . . But, James, I think you have something to say to me.

J A M E S.

Yes, I wished to tell you, that you were more unfortunate than I who paid, and yet never was in bed with the girl. As to what follows, I believe I should

have heard your history quite through, if Agatha had proved with child.

M A S T E R.

Stick by your conjecture, for the commissary told me some time after my confinement that she had come before him and made her declaration of pregnancy.

J A M E S.

So, so, you are father of a child . . .

M A S T E R.

To whom I have discharged every duty.

J A M E S.

But whom you never begot.

M A S T E R.

Neither the protection of the magistrates nor all the exertions of the commissary, could prevent this affair from following the regular course of justice;

but, as the character of the daughter and her parents was so bad, I got off from marrying from this consideration. I was condemned to pay a considerable fine, to pay the lying in expences, and to provide for the maintenance and education of a child produced by the exertions of my friend the Chevalier de St. Ouin, who was his exact picture in miniature. He was a thumping boy, of whom Mademoiselle Agatha was safely delivered between the seventh and eighth month; he was provided with a good nurse, whom I have paid every month to this moment.

J A M E S.

Of what age, sir, may your son be?

M A S T E R.

He will soon be ten years old. I have him all this time in the country, where

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the

the school master of the place has taught him to read, write, and cast accounts. It is not far from the place of our destination, and I avail myself of this circumstance to pay the people what I owe them, to take away the boy, and put him to business . . .

James and his Master slept once more upon the road. They were too near the term of their journey to allow James to resume the history of his amours; besides that his sore throat was far from being well. Next day they arrived. — Where? — Upon my honour I cannot tell. — And what was their business at the place to which they were going? — Any thing you please. Do you imagine that James and his Master told their business to every body? — Whatever it was it did not re-

quire them to stay above a fortnight: Whether it terminated well or ill, is a point which I cannot decide. James's sore throat was removed by two remedies of which he was not fond, regimen and repose.

One morning the Master said to his servant: James, bridle and saddle the horses, and fill your flask; we must go to the place I told you of which was instantly executed. They were now pushing on to the place where, for ten years, the Chevalier de St. Ouin's child had been maintained at the expence of James's Master. At some distance from the lodging they had left, the Master addressed James in the following words: James, what do you say of my amours?

JAMES.

J A M E S.

I say that there are strange things decreed on high. Here is a child begotten, God knows how? Who knows the part which this little bastard will act in the world? Who knows whether he is born for the happiness or for the destruction of an empire?

M A S T E R.

I answer for him; he is not born for either. I will make him a good turner or a good watch-maker. He will marry, he will beget children, who, to perpetuity, will turn chair backs in this world.

J A M E S.

Yes, if this be decreed on high. But what is there to hinder him issuing forth a Cromwell from the shop of a turner?

Did not he, who brought his king to the scaffold, come out of a brewer's shop, and do not we say at this day. . . .

M A S T E R.

Leave this subject. You are now in good health, you are acquainted with my amours; in conscience you cannot refuse to resume the history of yours.

J A M E S.

Every thing opposes it. In the first place, the little way we now have to travel; secondly, our having forgot where I was; thirdly, the devil of a presentiment I have, that . . . that this history is never to be finished; that the recital will produce some mischief, and that no sooner shall I have resumed it than it will be interrupted by some catastrophe, fortunate or unfortunate.

MASTER

M A S T E R.

If it is fortunate, so much the better!

J A M E S.

Agreed; but I have it here . . . that it will be unfortunate.

M A S T E R.

Unfortunate! be it; but whether you speak or be silent, will the event fail to happen on that account?

J A M E S.

Who knows that?

M A S T E R.

You came into the world two or three ages too late.

P 4

JAMES.

J A M E S.

No, sir, I came into it precisely at the proper time, like every other person.

M A S T E R.

You would have proved a great augur.

J A M E S.

I do not know exactly what an augur is, nor am I anxious to know.

M A S T E R.

It is one of the important chapters in your treatise of divination.

J A M E S.

Yes, but it is so long since it was written, that I do not recollect a word of it. Hold, sir, there is something that
knows

knows more than all the augurs, sooth-saying geese, and sacred chickens of the republic, and that is the flask. Let us examine the flask . . .

James took the flask and consulted it at great length. The Master pulled out his watch and his snuff box, looked what o'clock it was, took a pinch of snuff, and James said; Methinks, at present, that I see destiny less black. Tell me where I was.

M A S T E R.

In the castle of Desglands, your knee a little better, and Denise, charged by her mother, to attend you.

J A M E S.

Denise was very obedient. The wound on my knee was almost closed, I
had

had even been able to dance in the circle the night we were assembled by the child. Nevertheless, I occasionally suffered incredible pain. It struck the surgeon of the castle, who knew a little more about these matters than his brother of the profession by whom I was first attended, that these pains which so obstinately returned, could only be occasioned by some extraneous matter which had continued in the flesh after the ball was extracted. In consequence of this idea he came into my room one morning early; he caused a table to be placed by my bed side, and, when my curtains were drawn, I saw the table covered with incision knives, Denise seated by my pillow weeping salt tears; her mother standing with her arms across and very melancholy; the surgeon without his coat, the sleeves of his shirt tucked

tucked up, and an incision knife in his right hand.

M A S T E R.

You terrify me.

J A M E S.

I was frightened too. Friend, says the surgeon to me, are you tired of the sufferings you endure?—Very much so.—Do you wish to put an end to them and to preserve your limb?—Certainly.—Put it out of bed then and allow me to do with it as I please . . .—I present my leg. The surgeon takes the handle of his knife in his teeth, introduces my leg under his left arm, there fixes it fast, resumes his knife, introduces the point at the orifice of my wound, and makes a large and deep incision. I never moved a feature, but Jane turned
away

away her head, and Denise uttered a shriek and was taken ill

Here James paused in his recital, and again paid his addresses to the flask. These addresses were the more frequent as the distances were short; or, as mathematicians say, in the inverse ratio of the distances. He was so accurate in his measures, that though full when he set out, it was just empty upon his arrival. Indeed, your land surveyors and commissioners of the roads, might have made an excellent Odometer of it, for at every consultation James made he always found it sufficiently true. On this occasion, it was employed to recover Denise from her swoon, and to recruit himself from the pain occasioned by the incision which the surgeon had made in

3 his

his knee. Denise recovered, and himself recruited, he continued.

THE FIRST OF FEBRUARY.

JAMES.

This enormous incision laid open the bottom of the wound, from which the surgeon pulled out, with his pincers, a very small piece of cloth of part of my breeches which, remaining in, had caused the pain I endured, and prevented the complete healing of the sore. After this operation my situation grew better and better, thanks to the care of Denise ; there was no more pain, no more fever ; I regained my appetite, sleep and strength. Denise dressed me with infinite exactness and delicacy. It was a pleasure to see the circumspection and the address with which she took off my dressings, the fear she felt of giving me the smallest pain, the manner in which she
bathed

bathed my wound. I was seated upon the side of the bed ; she had one knee on the ground, my leg was laid upon her thigh which I sometimes pressed a little. I had one hand over her shoulder, and I saw her perform her business, with a feeling of tenderness, which I believe she shared. When the dressing was finished I took hold of her hands, and thanked her. I knew not what to say ; I did not know how to testify to her my gratitude, she was standing with down-cast eyes and listened to me without saying a word. There never passed a single pedlar by the castle, from whom I did not buy something ; sometimes a handkerchief ; sometimes a few yards of calicoe, or muslin ; a gold cross ; cotton stockings ; a ring ; a granate necklace. When my little purchase was made, my embarrassment was to offer, hers to accept

cept the present. First of all I shewed it to her then ; if she liked it, I would say, Denise, it is for you that I bought it If she accepted my hand trembled while I presented it, and hers while she received it. One day, not knowing any longer what to give her, I bought some garters. They were of silk, embroidered with white, red, and blue, with a device. In the morning, before she came, I placed them on the back of a chair at the side of my bed. As soon as Denise perceived them, she said : Oh ! what pretty garters !—They are for my sweetheart, replied I.—You have then a sweetheart, Mr. James ?—Assuredly, did I never tell you very pretty too.—And you love her well ? . . . Most dearly.—And she loves you equally ?—I do not know that. These garters are for her, and she has
promised

promised me a favour, which I believe will make me mad if she grants it.—And what is that favour?—It is, that of these two garters, I am to tie on one with my own hands.—Denise blushed, mistook the aim of my discourse, believed the garters were intended for another; became melancholy, committed one blunder after another, looked about for every thing necessary for my dressing, had it under her eyes but could not find it; overturned the wine she had warmed, approached my bed to dress me, took my leg with a trembling hand, untied my bandages quite wrong, and when the wound was to be fomented, she had forgot every article that was requisite; she went to seek for them, she dressed me, and, as she did it, I perceived that she cried.—Denise, said I, I think you are crying,

crying, what is the matter with you?—Nothing.—Has any body injured you?—Yes.—Who is the villain who has done it?—It is you.—I?—Yes.—And how has that happened? I . . . Instead of answering me, she turned her eyes to the garters.—What then! said I, is it this that has made you cry?—Yes.—Hah! Denise, do not weep, it is for you that I bought them.—Mr. James, do you really speak true?—Very true, so true, that there they are . . . At the same time I presented them both, but retained one; at that moment a smile gleamed through her tears. I took her by the arm and led her to the bed, I took one of her feet which I placed upon the side, I lifted her petticoats as far as the knee, where she held them close with both hands; I kissed her leg; I fastened the garter I had retained, and hardly

was it fixed when Jane, her mother, entered.

M A S T E R.

What a provoking visit this !

J A M E S.

Perhaps yes, perhaps no. Instead of observing our confusion, she looked only at the garter which her daughter held in her hand. What a pretty garter, said she ; but where is the other ?—On my leg, replied Denise ; he told me he had bought them for his sweetheart, and I judged that it was for me. Is it not just, mamma, that since I have put on one I ought to keep the other ?—Ah ! Mr. James, Denise is right, one garter is of no use without the other, and you would not take back that she has got !—Why not ? said I.—Because Denise would

would not like it, no more would I.
 —But let us accommodate the matter,
 I will fasten the other in your presence.
 —No, no, that is impossible.—She must
 then restore me both.—That cannot be
 neither.—

But James and his Master are now
 at the entrance of the village where
 they were going to see the child and
 the foster parents of the Chevalier de
 Saint Ouin's child. James was silent;
 his Master said to him: Let us dis-
 mount, and here make a pause.—Why?
 —Because, according to all appearance,
 you are approaching very near the con-
 clusion of your amours.—Not quite so.
 —When a man arrives at the knee,
 he has not far to go.—Ah Master,
 said James, Denise had a longer thigh
 than most . . . Let us dismount, however.

They dismount, James first, and presented himself, with agility, at his Master's boot. No sooner had the Master put his foot upon the stirrup than the straps gave away, which occasioned him to fall backwards, and would certainly have thrown him violently on the ground, if his valet had not received him in his arms.

M A S T E R.

The deuce, James, is it thus you attend to my safety? How near was I breaking my ribs and my arms, and cutting my head; nay, perhaps being killed?

J A M E S.

Well, and where would have been the great harm of that?

M A S T E R.

What do you say, rascal? Stop, stop, I will teach you to speak . . .

And

And here the Master, after twisting his whip twice round his fist, fell to pursuing James, whilst James turned round the horse with loud bursts of laughter. His Master cursed and swore, foamed with rage, wheeled round the horse, pouring out against James a torrent of invectives, and this chace continued till both overrun with perspiration and exhausted with fatigue, stopped one on each side of the horse, James panting and continuing to laugh, his Master panting and darting at him the most furious glances. They were beginning to recover their breath, when James said to his Master : sir, my Master, will you now agree ?

M A S T E R.

Agree to what, dog, knave, ruffian, except that you are the most wicked of
 a 3 servants,

servants, and I the most unfortunate of masters ?

J A M E S.

Is it not evidently demonstrated that we act the greatest part of the time we live without the interposition of our will? There, put your hand on your breast ; in all you have said or done for half an hour, was your will any way employed ? Have you not been my puppet, and might you not have continued for a month to be my punchinello, had I proposed it ?

M A S T E R.

What ! it was only play, then ?

J A M E S.

Nothing more, indeed, sir.

M A S T E R.

MASTER.

And you expected the breaking of the straps ?

JAMES.

Certainly, for I had arranged it.

MASTER.

So it was the wire which you fixed to my head to guide me to your fancy ?

JAMES.

Admirably guessed !

MASTER.

And was your impertinent reply premeditated ?

JAMES.

Yes, premeditated.

Q 4

MASTER.

M A S T E R.

You are a dangerous ragamuffin.

J A M E S.

Say rather that I am a subtle reasoner, thanks to my captain, who one day procured himself the same pastime at my expence.

M A S T E R.

But suppose I had been wounded ?

J A M E S.

It was decreed on high, and in my foresight, that this would not happen.

M A S T E R.

Come, let us sit down, we need repose.

They

They sat down, James saying, plague take the fool !

M A S T E R,

It is yourself, you mean ?

J A M E S.

Yes, myself, for not having reserved a single glass in the flask.

M A S T E R.

Feel no regret upon the occasion, for I should have drank it, as I am dying of thirst.

J A M E S.

Plague take the fool, still say I, for not having reserved two !

The Master entreated him to beguile their weariness and thirst, by
continuing

continuing his recital. James refused ; his Master looked sulky, and James allowed himself to seem sulky also. At last, with a protest against the misfortunes which might ensue resuming the history of his amours, he said :

One holiday, when the lord of the castle was at the chace . . . After these words he stopped short, and said : I do not know. It is impossible for me to advance ; it seems that I have again the hand of destiny at my throat, and that I feel it squeezing me ; for God's sake, sir, allow me to hold my tongue . . . Well, then, hold your tongue, and go and ask at the first cottage, where the foster father of the child lives . . . It was at the farthest house ; they proceeded to it, each of them holding his horse by the bridle. At this moment the door
opened

opened and a man appeared. The Master uttered a cry and clapping his hand on his sword, the man in question did the same. The two horses took fright at the clash of arms, that of James broke his bridle and escaped, and, at the same instant, the person, with whom James's Master fought, was laid dead on the spot. The peasants of the village assembled. James's Master instantly leaped into the saddle, and flew full speed. James was seized, his hands tied behind his back, and taken before the justice of the peace, who committed him to prison. The man who was killed was the Chevalier de Saint Ouin, whom chance had conducted, with Agatha, precisely that very day to the house of the nurse of their child. Agatha tore her hair on the dead body of her lover. James's Master was already
out

out of sight. James, as he went from the house of the justice to prison, frequently said to himself; It does not signify, this would have happened in spite of all our care, for certainly it was decreed on high . . .

And here I stop, because I have told you all I know of these personages.— And the amours of James? James said a hundred times that it was decreed on high that he should never finish the history of his amours, and I see that James was right. I see, reader, that you are vexed at this circumstance; heyday, resume his recital where he left it and continue it as you please, or rather pay a visit to Mademoiselle Agatha, enquire the name of the village where James is imprisoned. Procure an interview with James, examine him, he will not need much importuning to give
you

you satisfaction. This will relieve his spirits. According to some documents which I have good reason to hold suspicious, I could supply what is wanting. But to what purpose? We can only be interested in what we believe to be true. At the same time, as it would be rash to pronounce without a mature examination upon the conversations of *James the Fatalist and his Master*, the most important work that has appeared since the *Pantagruel* of Master Francis Rabelais, and the *Life and Adventures of Compere Mathieu*, I shall again peruse these memoirs with all the impartiality of which I am capable, and, within eight days, inform you of my definitive judgment, with reservation of a power to retract whenever a person, more intelligent than myself, shall prove that I have been mistaken.

The editor adds: The eight days have expired. I have examined the memoirs; out of three paragraphs which I found containing more than the manuscript of which I am in possession, the first and the last appear to me to be original, and the middle one evidently to be interpolated. The following is the first, which supposes a gap in the conversation of James and his Master.

One holiday, when the lord of the castle was at the chace, and the rest of his domestics had gone to mass at the parish church, which was a full quarter of a league distant, James had got up and Denise was seated by his side. They were silent, they had the appearance of pouting to each other, and they did so in reality. James had put every
method

method in practice to prevail upon Denise to make him happy, and Denise had remained firm. After this long silence, James, weeping bitterly, said to her in a harsh and angry tone: It is because you do not love me . . . Denise, provoked, rose, laid hold of his arm, led him hastily to the bed side, sat down, and said: Very well, Mr. James, I do not love you, then? Very well, Mr. James, do what ever you please with the wretched Denise And saying these words she burst into tears and was almost suffocated with sighs . . .

Tell me, reader, what you would have done in James's place?.. Nothing.. Very well! it is precisely what he did. He led Denise back to her chair, threw himself at her feet, wiped the tears which streamed from her eyes, kissed her

her hands, consoled and cheered her, believed that he was tenderly beloved, and threw himself in full confidence upon her tenderness, till the moment when she should be pleased to reward his. Denise was very sensibly touched by this proceeding.

It will be objected perhaps, that James, at the feet of Denise, could not very readily wipe her eyes unless the chair was very low. The manuscript does not mention, but this is to be supposed.

Next follows the second paragraph, copied from the life of *Tristram Shandy*, unless the conversation of *James the Fatalist and his Master* be anterior to that work, and parson Sterne be the plagiarist which I am induced to disbelieve

lieve from a very particular esteem which I entertain for Mr. Sterne, whom I distinguish from the greater part of the literary men of his country; with whom it is a very frequent practice to steal from us and then to abuse us.

Another time, it was in the morning, Denise came to dress James. Every soul in the castle was asleep. Denise, trembling, approached; when she reached James's door she stopped, doubtful whether to enter or retire. Trembling she entered, and remained a considerable time at James's bed side, without daring to open the curtains. She gently drew them aside, and, trembling, she bid James good morning. Trembling she enquired after his night's rest and his health. James told her that he had not closed his eyes, that he had suffered

and still suffered from a cruel itching in his knee. Denise offered to sooth it. She took a piece of flannel, James put his leg out of bed, and Denise began rubbing it with her flannel below the sore, at first with one finger, then with two, with three, with four, then with her whole hand. James gazed upon her as she did it, and was intoxicated with love. Then Denise rubbed upon the sore itself with the flannel, the scar of which was still inflamed, first with one finger, then with two, with three, with four, with her whole hand. But it was not enough to have allayed the itching below the knee, upon the knee, it was necessary to allay it also above the knee, where it only raged with greater keenness. Denise applied her flannel above the knee and fell a rubbing there very stoutly, first with one finger,

finger, then with two, with three, with four, with her whole hand. The passion of James, who had never ceased to gaze upon her, rose to such a pitch, that no longer able to resist, he seized the hand of Denise and kissed it and kissed it

But the circumstance that leaves no doubt of the plagiarism, is what follows: The plagiary adds: If you are not satisfied with what I disclose to you of James's amours, reader, do something better, you have my leave. In whatever way you proceed I am sure you will end as I do.—You are mistaken, egregious calumniator, I will not end as you do. Denise was discreet—And who says the contrary? James seized her hand and kissed it, ay, her hand. It is you who have your mind corrupted and

understand what was never meant to be conveyed.—Heyday then ! he only kissed her hand ?—Certainly, James had too much sense to abuse her whom he intended to make his wife and to lay the foundation of a distrust which might have poisoned the happiness of the rest of his life.—But it is said in the preceding paragraph, that James had put every method in practice to prevail upon Denise to make him happy.—And this it would seem, because he did not intend to make her his wife.

The third paragraph, discovers James, our poor Fatalist, with irons on his feet and hands, stretched upon straw, at the extremity of a dark dungeon, mustering up all he had retained of his captain's principles of philosophy, and almost brought to believe, that, perhaps, he would

would one day regret this damp, noisome, gloomy abode, where he was fed upon black bread and water, and where he was forced to defend his feet and hands against the attacks of the rats and mice. We are told, that in the middle of his meditations, the doors of his prison and of his dungeon are burst open; that he is set at liberty along with a dozen robbers, and that he is enlisted in the gang of Mandrin*. Meanwhile the officers of justice, who were in pursuit of his Master, had overtaken, seized, and committed him to another prison. He was liberated through the good offices of the commissary, who had so effectually served him in his first adventure, and was living retired two

* A notorious French robber and house-breaker.

or three months after in the castle of Desglands, when chance restored to him a servant almost as essential to his happiness as his watch and his snuff-box. He never took a single pinch of snuff, he never once looked what o'clock it was, without exclaiming, with a sigh, what is become of you, my poor James ? . . . One night, the castle of Desglands was attacked by the Mandrins ; James recognized the abode of his benefactor and of his mistress. He interceded and secured the castle from pillage. We next read the pathetic detail of the unexpected interview of James, his Master, Desglands, Denise and Jean.—It is you, my friend!—It is you, my dear Master!—How came you among these people?—And how happens it that I have met you here?—It is you, Denise?

nise?—It is you, Mr. James?—Many a tear have you made me shed! . . . Desglands meanwhile cried: Bring glasses and wine, it is he who has saved the lives of us all . . . Some days after the old warden of the castle died, James obtained the place, and married Denise; with whom he employed himself in raising up disciples to Zeno and Spinoza, beloved by Desglands, cherished by his Master, and adored by his wife; for so it was decreed on high.

Some would have persuaded me, that his Master and Desglands fell in love with his wife. I know not how this may be, but certain I am that every night he would say to himself; If it is decreed on high that you are to be a cuckold, James, do what you may you shall be one; if it is decreed on high, however,

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however, that you are not to be a cuckold, do what they please you shall not be one. Sleep then, my friend . . . and, with these reflections, he fell asleep.

THE END.

